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W. ROMAINE.

Black-friars,
June 6, 1789.

THE

INTRODUCTION.

ALL viſible Nature is but a Picture of the Grace of Chriſt. As every Work of God tends to effect or demonſtrate the higheſt Goodneſs and Glory; ſo, therefore, the Creation and Arrangement of this World, having no ſublimer End, were ordained to expreſs his Bounty in the Salvation of Man. There is not an Object about us, but which declares the Nature, the Neceſſity, or the Perfection of that Salvation. The Wiſdom of God is written upon every Subſtance and Property, or wrought into their very Frame and Texture, in the moſt bright and indelible Characters. We may truly ſay, with the Poet,

The World's a Syſtem of Theology.

The *inviſible things of* God *from the Creation of the World are* clearly ſeen, *being underſtood by the Things that are made.* 'Tis Man's Ignorance alone, an Ignorance brought in and ſupported by Sin, which keeps him from thoſe raviſhing Contemplations of Truth, Beauty, and Glory, which God hath placed upon the whole Creation, and which conſtitute one great Part of Happineſs here and hereafter. 'Tis a ſad Truth, that Men may be knowing enough in thoſe Things, which riſe or have riſen from the little Cunning or Power of their Fellow-mortals; that they may reflect upon the Hiſtories of Nations, and the Riſe and Fall of Empires; inveſtigate the Science of antient or of modern Schools, and know all that can be known from *Hermes* down to *Newton*; while, with all this Skill in things merely human, they may be exceeding ignorant of the moſt important Purpoſe of God in the Formation of every Object about them. To ſuch the ſplendid Univerſe is but a ſumptuous Raree-ſhew, having no Uſe but ſuperficial Speculation, which leaves the Heart as before, or, if in any reſpect altered, only ſwoln with the Conceit of its own Importance and Superiority among Mankind.

For

For an End like this, Study is, to ſay the beſt, but ſolemn Trifling; and hence the moſt ingenious, without Grace, can but

See Nature in ſome partial narrow Shape,
And let the Author of the Whole eſcape.

How poſſible is it to know the various Characters and Languages of the moſt diſtant Ages, and not be able, at the ſame time, to underſtand one ſingle Letter in the Alphabet of God? And on the other hand, to the Confuſion of Man's proud Underſtanding, how truly may it be obſerved, that the Mind may be extremely ignorant in all human Letters or Learning; and yet be moſt happily and graciouſly ſkilled in the Wiſdom and Knowledge which endure for ever?

It may alſo be juſtly deplored, that even true Believers, who have obtained ſome of the Rudiments of this moſt invaluable Wiſdom, make but too ſlow a Progreſs after further Attainments; and that they can careleſsly paſs over thouſands of heavenly Leſſons, inſcribed upon all ſurrounding Objects in ſuch beautiful Impreſſions, as might animate their Hearts to love and adore the gracious Hand which drew them.

'Tis the Deſign of this little Piece to collect a few of theſe ſacred Inſtructions, which GOD has marked upon ALL about us, that the Reader, by peruſing theſe imperfect Hints, may be prompted to conſider upon what he treads, and, while he paſſes by a thouſand inanimate Subſtances, may read what is written upon them. He may indeed go forth and read on; for the Leſſons are infinite, and the Knowledge is unbounded. 'Tis a large Book which GOD hath opened in his Works; and he hath given a lively Commentary upon it in his Word. The one conſiſts of living Hieroglyphics; and the other contains the Characters, which explain them. They do not contradict each other, nor talk of different Themes. *Created by* CHRIST *and for* CHRIST, there is a mutual and delightful Harmony through their reſpective Frames; and when harmoniouſly underſtood, a double Glory is ſeen in *both*. While the Reader meditates, therefore, let him pray for the Inſtruction of that Divine Spirit, who formed theſe ſacred Types, that he may both comprehend their Purpoſe and apply them to Uſe. With this holy Inſtructor, his Garden will be like *Eden*, full of delightful Fruit, and his Field become a Spot, which the Lord hath bleſſed.

THE

THE SEASONS.

GOD hath placed an Order or Conſtitution in the Univerſe, which cannot be broken. Every Thing ſucceeds in its Series or Courſe. The whole Progreſſion is invariable. Summer never comes in *January*, nor the Froſt and Darkneſs of *December* in *June*. The Earth glides through its Orbit without a Moment's Variation in *Time*, and, though it paſs a Courſe of many Millions of Miles, never errs ſo much as the Breadth of a Hair in its *Place*. All Things move, but move with *Certainty*. There is no ſuch Thing as *Chance* in the Ordinations of GOD. 'Tis a fooliſh Word, which ſprang from heathen Atheiſts, and is fit only to be uſed by them. All the Series or Succeſſions of what is called NATURE proceed by an invariable Law, ariſing from the

invariable Mind of God. We find this *longus ordo*, this endleſs Arrangement, of Things, frequently owned by the Heathen Philoſophers. They believed, that all Nature was under the *Government of an eternal Rule*. It is ſo obvious, that the Epicureans themſelves could not altogether miſs the View. Without it, even their futile Syſtem of Atoms could not hang together. It ſtrikes every Man: And it is thought a full Anſwer to Inquiries upon any natural Object, when the Form or Properties of it are ſaid, or ſhewn to be, *natural*. Men are ſatisfied when they perceive, that the Object is reduced to an eſtabliſhed Rule or Order; and they make it (as indeed it is) a great Point of Learning and Knowledge to comprehend ſomething of that Order and Rule. The wiſe Man hath a ſtriking Paſſage upon this Subject in *Eccleſ.* iii. 11. which might perhaps have been juſtly tranſlated thus: God *hath formed all Things beautiful in their Time; he hath alſo placed a Secret in their Heart* [i. e. a hidden Senſe or Doctrine in the very ſubſtance of all Things], *without which* [or the Knowledge of which] *a Man cannot find out the Conſtruction which GOD hath formed* [the Object of God's Purpoſe]

Purpoſe] *from the Beginning to the End.* "The viſible Works of the Creation (ſays "a learned Author) are the *Problem* or "*Ænigma*, whereby, through the Miniſtry "of the Senſes, *the inviſible Things of GOD* "penetrate or enter into the Mind, and ſo "*become Objects* of the Underſtanding." The *Word* of GOD alſo, as well as his Works, is full of Similitude, Parable, or Ænigma, to be underſtood only (as Chriſt ſays) *by thoſe to whom it is given.* He ever *opened his Mouth in Similitude, and he ſpake Ænigmas from the Beginning.* (*Pſalm* lxxviii. 2.) The Book of *Proverbs* (or rather *Similitudes*) treats, in this Mode, of Chriſt and his Graces. And Chriſt himſelf, to the World at large, *never ſpake without a Parable*; and his Sayings, to this Day, are a Parable to the World. JEHOVAH, however, by whom all Things exiſt and ſubſiſt, whatever he ſpeaks or acts, carries on the whole by the Plan of his foreknowing and unerring Wiſdom. He guides every Object, preciſely and ſurely, to that particular End, for which he framed it.

There is alſo an Order or Conſtitution of GRACE, which, like that of Nature, can never be broken. The ſame Rule

obtains in *both*; and from both, though in different Degrees, God effects the ſame Purpoſe, which is his own Glory. The Birth of *Abraham* at one particular Period, of *David* at another, and of *Chriſt* himſelf at a third, was all pre-ordained, and could not poſſibly have occurred at any other Period; becauſe the Period of God's Appointment was the beſt, and God can only do what is beſt. (See *Acts* xvii. 26.) Theſe Periods are reſpectively called their *Fullneſs of Time*, by which Term we are to underſtand a *Meaſure*, and a Meaſure of *Exactneſs*. The coming either before or after the preſcribed Period, would be a *Defect* or *Exceſs* in that Meaſure, and conſequently muſt impeach either the Wiſdom of God in appointing, or the Power of God in performing. There is an abſolute Neceſſity for this Arrangement of the Series; becauſe, without it, all Things, ſpiritual, natural, and divine, could not but run into Confuſion. All Wiſdom conſiſts in Diſpoſition. We ſee the Beauty and Force of Order in our own Affairs: And ſhall we preſume to think, that the God of all Order has no Direction in his?

To

To come nearer to ourſelves. The Time of every Believer's Birth is appointed, his Diſpoſitions for the Reception of divine Grace are ordained, the exact Moment of its Deſcent is preſcribed, the ſeveral Exerciſes and Progreſſions of it are ordered; in ſhort, he can do nothing, think nothing, and enjoy nothing of or for GOD, but what GOD, in his Conſtitution of Grace, hath thought fit and appointed for him.

What a Comfort, what a Stay is this, to his Soul? From THE IMMUTABILITY *of* GOD's *Counſel* he receives this *ſtrong Conſolation*, that he is *appointed, not unto Wrath, but to obtain Salvation through Jeſus Chriſt*; that this gracious Deſignation can neither be perplexed nor broken; that the Order of Nature is not more ſure of its Courſe, than the Order of Grace of its Progreſs in him, for the ſame Omnipotence carries on both; that the Glory of GOD is concerned in his *Preſervation* from the Diſtractions of Sin and Evil, in his *Enjoyment* of Grace and Godlineſs, and in his *Perſeverance* to Life eternal; and that all Things, however intricate (like many Operations in Nature) to his Comprehenſion, ſhall work together and ter-

minate in this great Point—his everlaſting Good. A Man, who experimentally knows and enjoys this bleſſed Truth (for the barren Speculation of it is not worth a Name,) becomes, in ſome Senſe, immutable himſelf; for he embraces the Immutability of GOD, who ſupports both him and all things. He is not *toſſed about with Winds of Doctrine*; but *his Heart ſtandeth faſt, truſting in the Lord.* Nor can he be lazy or inactive in the Work of Grace; becauſe, being united to Chriſt, he is actuated by that SPIRIT, which is all Life, Vigor, Animation, and Efficacy. Nothing, under GOD's immediate Agency, is ſluggiſh or ſlow. What exceeds the Velocity of the heavenly Bodies? And yet they appear to be only inert Matter in themſelves. Shall a Soul then, which has *the Spirit of Life in Chriſt Jeſus*, and which is framed for the full Viſion and Activity of GOD, be leſs ſwift in Obedience, according to its Place in this *ſpiritual* Conſtitution; than a Lump of groſs Subſtance in the *natural?* Doth not the whole Hiſtory of the Children of GOD, in all Ages, directly prove the contrary? Whatever lives, acts. So the divine Life is and muſt be divinely active and alert.

Sin

Sin and Corruption alone are the *caput mortuum*, the dead Refuſe, out of which no Life can ſpring, and which are thrown aſide from GOD's Preſence, as uſeleſs and vile.

WINTER.

I. THIS is the moſt gloomy and unpleaſant Seaſon of the Year. Every Proſpect abroad is uncomfortable; and the Earth wears the Face of univerſal Barrenneſs. The Melody of the feathered Race is not heard; but a melancholy Silence prevails over Lawns and Woods and the once delightful Fields, ſave when it is broken by the plaintive Cries of the Herds, or the harſh Murmurs of the Winds. All Creation ſeems loaded with Diſtreſs. Storms and Torrents threaten Vengeance from the Skies: And the diſtant Sun, often obſcured or faintly felt, ſcatters but ſeldom an oblique and interrupted Ray, rather to diſcover the general Waſte, than to enrich (as at other Times) the deſolated Scene.

WHAT a ſpeaking Picture is here of the Fall of Man! How forcibly deſcribed his Miſery by Sin, his Unfruitfulneſs in good Works, his Diſtance from the Sun of Righteouſneſs, and his utter Alienation from the Life of GOD! His Heart is cold and barren, to the great End of his Being, like the frozen Ground: His Mind dark and uncomfortable, as the chilling Gloom of Winter; without Capacity to ſee GOD, without Ability to know him. The ſucceſſive Storms of Life vex and agitate his Soul. Care and Anxiety perplex his weariſome Way; and Miſery and Wretchedneſs ſurround him on every Side. *Without, are Fightings; within, Fears.* The Anguiſh of one human Heart afflicts another; and raging Paſſions in Thouſands, like angry Torrents, collect for the Diſtreſs and Deſtruction of other Thouſands, who oppoſe them with Paſſions equally raging and equally excited by Hell. Thus Mankind indulge the malignant Pleaſure of ſpreading that Deſolation and Sorrow, which they feel within, and which, by extending, they can only heighten but not remove. The Fall of Man brought Winter into his Soul, and Winter into the World. He is now diſtant, far diſtant from the Sun of Righteouſneſs; without Peace

Peace in Life, and without Hope in Death. This is his preſent Poſition by Nature: And he can no more deliver himſelf from it, than the Earth can ſubdue its natural Froſt, or emerge from Barrenneſs and Gloom, by any inherent Virtue of its own. The material Sun is ordained alone to effect this Bleſſing in the one Caſe; and the Sun of the Spiritual World alone can quicken and repleniſh, invigorate and reſtore, in the other.

II. WE may read another important Leſſon inſcribed upon the Face of Winter. The bittereſt Froſts are of immenſe Service to the Ground; they combine, only to ſever more minutely, the Particles of Soil, and to introduce the Supply of Salts, which are neceſſary to fertilize and repair the exhauſted Earth.

——The froſt-concocted Glebe
Draws in abundant vegetable Soul,
And gathers Vigor for the coming Year.

So, if Man had never fallen, the Grace and Mercy of God had never appeared in the illuſtrious Triumphs of Redemption, nor the bright Diſplay of his Love in recovering Sinners to a State of Dignity and Excellence,

Excellence, far ſuperior to that from which they fell. As Sin abounded to Man's Ruin, ſo Grace hath much more abounded in his Reſtoration to Life eternal.

God is often pleaſed, for the wiſeſt Ends, to ſuffer likewiſe a wintry State to paſs upon the Believer's Soul. His Comforts are nipped by piercing Froſts; and the howling Calamities of the World, like violent Tempeſts, are permitted to break in upon his Peace. But they are all neceſſary, both in Kind and Degree. They manure his Soul for the Fruits of Faith, Patience, and Righteouſneſs; and make the Spring of God's Countenance, in the appointed Time, doubly chearful and reviving. As the Winter deſtroys many noxious Weeds and deſtructive Inſects; ſo theſe ſtormy, and (it may be) piercing, Trials, check the Growth of many a baneful Luſt, curb the Luxuriancy of inordinate Paſſions, bind the Force of ſinful Tempers, check the Love of preſent Things, and diſpoſe the Ground of the Chriſtian's Heart for the freer Admiſſion of Things eternal.

III. IN

III. IN the Winter, a careful Huſbandman clears his Farm or his Garden of all improper Plants, improves his Fences, prunes or lops his Trees, manures the Soil, and clears away the Rubbiſh and Decays of the former Year.

In like manner, Chriſt, the ſpiritual Huſbandman, prepares his People's Souls by the Winter of Adverſity, or the Withdrawing of his ſenſible Preſence, for future Grace and Glory. He cuts up the Weeds and Thorns of the Soul, ſhews it the Lines and Boundaries of Faith, ſtrengthens its Hedge which Sin had broken down, and through which the *Boar of the Wood*, with the Fierceneſs of Rage, had come in to deſtroy, lays on a deep Manure from his holy Word, and ſubdues the unprofitable Hopes and Deſires of the Fleſh, which grew up in the former Days of Ignorance and Unbelief. All this proves the Skill and the Love of the ſpiritual Huſbandman in his favoured Garden; for, were he to omit theſe neceſſary Inſtances of his Care, the Soil would lay barren under its own Rubbiſh, or produce nothing but Weeds.

IV. WHEN

IV. WHEN the Winter approaches, all tender Plants are removed, from the penetrating Chills of the external Air, into the Green-houſe or Stove; where they are nouriſhed and attended, with that Degree of Warmth, which is proper for their Preſervation and Exiſtence.

And how often does the gracious Redeemer preſerve the feeble among his People from the Oppreſſor's Hand, and from the Severity of Trial? How frequently does he withdraw them from the trying Scene, either by the Interpoſition of his Providence, or by a Removal to his Throne? Others, like hardy Evergreens, can dare the ſharpeſt Storms, and are enabled to paſs through the ſevereſt Tribulations, not only without Loſs, but alſo with the greateſt Advantage: While theſe, through their Tenderneſs, ſeem more immediate Objects of his Care, and conſequently receive from him a more diſtinguiſhed Attention. Fainting, feeble Soul! See here thy Picture in Nature for thy Comfort in Grace. Contemplate the Bowels of Mercies, which move towards thee in thy Redeemer; and reproach not his kind Concern, which will not, which cannot,

cannot, leave thee utterly expoſed, by any unreſigning Murmurs and injurious Diſtruſt. As may be moſt ſalutary for thee, he will place thee where the Froſt ſhall not pinch, nor the Tempeſt annoy; or he will give thee Strength like an Oak, to ſuſtain and overcome in the End. Caſt thy Care then upon GOD; for he hath ſet his Care upon thee. Pray that *his* End may be anſwered by *thy* Sorrow: And then thy Sorrow ſhall ſoon have an End.

V. TREES, reduced or pruned in the Winter, grow more vigorouſly in the ſucceeding Year.

THE Trees alſo of the Lord's planting, being pruned of their worthleſs Branches, ſhoot forth with greater Strength and bear more rich and abundant Fruit for his Glory. Adverſity braces, and the Contraction of wild Deſire invigorates the Soul. If this pruning were not neceſſary Work for the Believer, the Lord would not perform it. He hath no Delight in afflicting his People; nor does he ever take from them what can yield a ſolid Good. And if he only remove Evil, or the Occaſion of Evil; what Folly and Unbelief

Unbelief muſt it be, which urges their Hearts to complain? Let his Will be done; and then Good will be done in them, and for them.

VI. YOUNG Trees are planted at this Seaſon, either for Fruit in the Garden, or for Timber in the Fields.

In like manner, God uſually chuſes trying Times for planting his Grace and increaſing his Church. The dreadful Perſecutions of former Ages only advanced the Number and ſtrengthened the Faith of the true Diſciples. "The "Blood of the Martyrs is the Seed of "the Church," ſaid *Tertullian*, who lived when Torrents of that Blood were daily ſhed. The World does more real Service than it intends, when the People of it *perſecute for Righteouſneſs Sake*. They ought to be charitably conſidered; for they know not what they deſpiſe. That Mockery of Wit, which has no Foundation in Wiſdom or Truth, retorts upon itſelf; as a Shot ſtriking againſt a Rock gives an imperceptible Blow, but a dangerous Rebound. If the World be diſpoſed to banter, one would not envy them the only Merriment they are likely

to

to have on this Account; nor would it be right for a Chriſtian to retort with the great Cynic of Antiquity, when he was told that the common People laughed at him; *and perhaps* (ſays he) *at them the Aſſes laugh too, yet as they care not for the Aſſes, ſo I care not for them.* If they merit nothing elſe, their Miſtake merits our Forgiveneſs and entitles them to our Prayers. And if Good be done to a Chriſtian by their Ill-will; let him be ſo grateful as to intreat of GOD, that they may ſhare it with him.—Brambles and Thiſtles grow ſpontaneouſly and without Culture, and in the Warmth of Summer flouriſh and abound. And mere Profeſſors, like theſe barren and worthleſs Shrubs, never ſpread their ſhewy Leaves but in the Times of Sunſhine and Proſperity. When the Lord lets looſe his Froſt for their Trial; down they drop with all their Foliage and Glory. Their Place may be ſought in the Church; but it will no where be found.

VII. The ſevereſt Winter deſtroys not all the Weeds. Many of the perennial Kinds, ſuch as Nettles, &c. ſurvive the ſharpeſt Broſts, and ſhoot forth again upon

upon the firſt Return of mild Weather: And the Seeds of the annual Sorts lay ſecreted in the Mould, till the approaching Spring; when they germinate with their wonted Vigor, and would ſoon cover the Surface of the Earth, to the Deſtruction of all good Plants, if ſuffered to remain.

A STRIKING Repreſentation this of Man's inbred Corruptions, and of their radical Strength, Fertility, and Rancour! No Trials can perfectly keep them down, no Adverſities entirely root them up. Like knotted Graſs, every Particle is full of an evil Life, and will ſpring and ſpread forth in Deſpight of human Toil. Often they ſeem reduced; and the Soul is ready to dream of abſolute Victory. But let the Occaſion or Temptation appear; and the Conflict muſt begin anew. In the moſt mortified Heart, they are only depreſſed as in a wintery State: The Roots of ſome are fully alive, and the Seeds of others are but hid. If Eaſe, and Proſperity, and Quietneſs, come upon the Soul; up ſhoot ſome or other of the peſtiferous Evils. And theſe, if let alone, would ſoon overgrow and ſtarve the Graces and Virtues, which GOD hath planted; would quickly reduce the Mind to its original Turpitude,

Turpitude, and render both it, and all that grows within it, the meeter Fuel for everlaſting Fire.

VIII. FREQUENTLY in Winter great Falls of Snow cover the Ground, and ſhield many Plants of the Field and Garden from deſtroying Froſts. This Snow, when melted, penetrates farther into the Earth than common Rain, is more impregnated with nitrous Particles, and ſaturates the Soil with an excellent Manure.

THE Word of GOD likewiſe is a ſweet Defence againſt all the Troubles and Adverſities, which can befal the Chriſtian's Soul. While it covers his Head from Danger, it preſerves his Heart from the chilling Impreſſions of Sin and Sorrow. It graciouſly refreſhes his inner Man, ſupports his tempted Spirit, and prepares him for a more abundant Eduction of *the Fruits of Righteouſneſs, which are by Chriſt Jeſus.* What Injury then can theſe trying Storms effect againſt his beſt, his everlaſting Intereſts? Rather, what Good do they not occaſion? What Advantages and Bleſſings do they not produce, in quickening and directing him to eternal Salvation? The Word and Grace of GOD, like the

the Rain and the Snow from Heaven, do not return unto him void, but accompliſh his every Pleaſure, and every Purpoſe for which he ſent them.

IX. AT this Seaſon, the Gardener digs about his young Trees and Shrubs, and dreſſes or manures the contiguous Ground, that they may grow with the greater Vigor and be diſpoſed to yield their reſpective Products, either of Fruit or Flowers, the more abundantly.

So, in the Times of Affliction or Trial, the great ſpiritual Huſbandman, meliorates the Ground of his People's Hearts, and particularly that of new Converts, that they may receive Strength and Eſtabliſhment, and bring forth Fruit to his Glory. Thus, according to the Apoſtle, *Tribulation worketh Patience, and Patience Experience, and Experience Hope,* with all the happy Conſequences attendant upon it. "Religion (ſaid a good Man) muſt needs "be the beſt Thing at all Times; for it "is evidently the beſt in a Time of Afflic-"tion." To which we may add, that as Affliction drives the believing Soul to Religion; ſo Religion enables it to rejoice over Affliction. He would have been unhappy,

happy, if he had never known what it is to be unhappy. Miniſters of the Word, in particular, are uſually much exerciſed in this way, that they may bring forth the Fruits of a ſound and ſtrong Experience for the Good of the Church. "Three "Things (ſaid *Luther*) make a Divine; "*Meditation*, *Prayer*, and *Temptation*." By Meditation he takes Root; by Prayer he ſhoots upward to bear Fruit; and by Temptation his hurtful or uſeleſs Excreſcences are cut off, and his Soul is eſtabliſhed for Heaven. For the Multitude of Diſtreſſes, God hath a Multitude of Mercies, which will as far outweigh the other, as the Greatneſs of the Univerſe does the Duſt of the Balance. The one likewiſe is *but for a Moment*, as well as *light*; but the other is for *an exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory*.

X. THE Winter compacts the tender Fibres of Trees, which have been produced in the preceding Seaſons, hardens the Subſtance of Trunks and Boughs, and thereby ſtrengthens the whole Fabric of Plants to ſuſtain the Increaſe of Fruit, Leaves, and Shoots, in the ſucceeding Year.

Of the ſame bleſſed Conſequence, in his believing People, are the afflicting Viſitations of God. If it were all Summer with them, if they had no Difficulties to encounter, no Sorrows to endure; their Hearts would grow luxuriant and proud, would run (as it were) into mere Leaves and Boughs, and by Habit would neither be capable of *enduring Hardneſs*, nor be ſtrong enough to bear up againſt the leaſt Storm of Viſitation, which might deſcend upon them. There is a *Need be* for every Temptation, not only that *the Trial of Faith might be precious* in God's Sight, but that it might be *made ſo manifeſt* in the Believer's, as to appear altogether *wrought in God*. Like Winter to the Body, it may give Pangs for the preſent; but moſt aſſuredly it will be the neceſſary Means of bringing *Peace at the laſt*.

XI. THOUGH many Trees and Plants at this Seaſon ſeem ſtripped and dead, and the Face of the Ground appears ſterile and bare; yet we know, that Life ſtill remains in the Stem and Branches, and that the Earth will appear with new Strength and Beauty, at the appointed Seaſon.

God's

God's Garden, which is his Church, has frequently ſuffered the Winter of Adverſity, and ſometimes a very ſevere one. At ſuch Seaſons, the Faithful ſeemed to have periſhed out of the Land. What a dreadful Winter occurred in the Time of *Noah?* Only eight Plants left alive, and not all of theſe good and valuable. What an awful Seaſon paſſed upon the Cities of the Plain? Only three Branches ſaved from the Deſtruction. In the Time of *Ahab*, what a Winter did the Church of God ſuſtain? That great Prophet *Elijah*, upon a View of the Deſolation, imagined that the whole Garden of God was periſhed, and that not a ſingle Plant remained beſides himſelf. In other Periods, both before and after Chriſt, how many dreadful Storms has God's Plantation endured? In the Time of the *Maccabees*, and under the Roman Emperors of the higher Empire, it is impoſſible to read the Church's Extremities without Anguiſh. And later ſtill, for many Centuries before the Reformation, we may aſk; Where were the Faithful? The *Albigenſes*, *Waldenſes*, *Berengarians*, *Wickliffites*, and ſome here and there who lived above the Errors of *Rome*, furniſh a few Names or Notices of the Life of

Grace then extant upon Earth; and yet, conſidering the long Courſe of Time, *but* a few. In the Climes of this World, which are not ſuited to the Plants of God (for theſe are by no Means indigenous, but exotic here), there is but little Sunſhine, and much foul Weather. One muſt wonder at their very Exiſtence in a Region ſo intemperate for them, and ſo expoſed to the Ravages of wild Beaſts and ravening Fowls; was it not recollected, that they are kept by the Almighty Power of God the *Preſerver*. Yet, notwithſtanding all theſe hoſtile and unfavourable Appearances, the Garden of God is ſafe, flouriſhes, and lives, in the worſt of Times: And (what ſhould always be remembered) in *thoſe* Times lives moſt truly. The Prophet could not ſee *one* Plant of Grace in all *Iſrael* beſides himſelf; but God had numbered *ſeven Thouſand*. *David* cried out, that *the godly Man ceaſeth*, and that *the faithful fail*. Pſalm xii. 1. Yet, in a Time of Trial, he found that *many were with him*, Pſalm lv. 18. While *Iſaiah* propheſied, Mention is made of *a great Forſaking in the Midſt of the Land* [or the Church, which is often called *the Land* emphatically in

in the Old Teſtament]; but yet *in it there was to be a* TENTH [the Lord's *own* Portion, his *Remnant*, as it is called in Iſa. xxii. and Rom. ix. 27. and xi. 5.] *and it was to return and be eaten* [it was to be preſerved and accepted]: *As a Teil-tree, and as an Oak, whoſe Subſtance is in them, when they caſt their Leaves; ſo the holy Seed ſhould be the Subſtance thereof.* Iſa. vi. 13. The true Life of *Iſrael* was in *Iſrael*, or the Church profeſſing, in the deadeſt Time, and formed the ſpiritual Subſtance of it. GOD never forſook his own People; they are preſerved for ever. They may not be ſeen, perhaps, by the Eyes of Men, who, judging according to Appearances only, often judge moſt perverſely; but they are ever in GOD's Eye, and are ever regarded too as *the Apple of his Eye*. They, who touch them injuriouſly, ſooner or later touch them to their Coſt. Theſe *Plants of Renown* may not *ſeem* to thrive, but they *do* thrive, and commonly thrive moſt (like the Palm-tree) under the greateſt Oppreſſion. GOD's *Corn* may appear but a *Handful upon Earth*, and to be growing on very unfavorable Spots, *the Tops of the Mountains*; but *its Fruit* or Increaſe *ſhall ſhake like Lebanon*. Pſalm lxxii. 16. No Blaſts can deſtroy it; no Severity of

Seaſons diminiſh its Life; no Enemy eradicate its Being. God hath *made an Hedge about it* (as *Satan*, though a Liar, truly ſaid of *Job*); and the Gates of Hell ſhall not prevail againſt it.

This ſhould be Matter of Comfort to truly ſerious Perſons at all Times. Let the World be in never ſo many Commotions, and let all Hell break looſe upon it; the beſt Intereſts are ſafe, God's People muſt be kept, and his Cauſe ſhall ſtand faſt; becauſe God cannot loſe his Intereſt in them, nor can their Redemption be paid in vain. How many reſtleſs Minds would be quieted, did ſuch Conſiderations meet with their due Weight? And, after all, what avail the Buſtle and Hurry of Men? Doth not God ride in and direct the Storm? Can the Creatures ſuſpend a Drop of Rain from falling, or keep back the impetuous Winds?—A Chriſtian's beſt Armor is the Armor of God, his ſharpeſt Sword is the Word of God, his moſt effectual Artillery Prayers and Tears. Theſe will avail, and have availed, when the Rage of Armies has been buried in Confuſion. He would, in the Uſe of his Privileges, be ſoon led to ſee, like *Eliſha*'s young Man, that they are more that be with

with him, than they that are againſt him. 2 Kings vii. 17. Let the Potſherds of the Earth ſtrive; but the Servant of the Lord muſt not ſtrive. The Profeſſion of Arms is however not unlawful, and it is juſtifiable for a Nation to riſe in its own Defence; but a Chriſtian ſhould conſider theſe as nothing without GOD, and employ far more efficacious Means againſt the Power of Man. In a Word, his Paſſions ought not to actuate his Conduct, but Faith ſhould direct his Eye and guide his Hand. And, for his Encouragement reſpecting the Potency of Faith, let him get by Heart, and *into* his Heart, the whole eleventh Chapter of the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*. When *Moſes* did but lift up his Hand to GOD in Faith, *that* invincible Principle (not the Swords or Numbers of the *Iſraelites*) *turned to flight the Armies of the Aliens*. It would be ſafer to meet an Hoſt of Enemies, than to oppoſe the faithful Prayer of an *Elijah*, an *Eliſha*, or a *Moſes*.

XII. WHO could ſuppoſe, were not the Fact conſtantly confirmed by Senſe and Experience, that, when the Huſbandman planted Acorns, Oaks ſhould ſpring

up from thoſe ſmall Subſtances, and form Bodies of ſuch Strength and Magnitude? The Subſtance of an Acorn has not the leaſt Similitude to a Tree. Yet nobody heſitates upon this wonderful Accretion: Nobody doubts of this inſcrutable Proceſs. If a Perſon had never ſeen or heard of ſuch a Revolution; with what Aſtoniſhment would he meet the Diſcovery? but ſo it is throughout our whole material Syſtem; *ab ovo omnia.* All Things ſpring from their reſpective Eggs; Animals as well as Plants; and burſt into View from their ſeveral Incloſures. The Eggs of Plants, which are their Seeds, are conſtructed to maintain the *Germen*, or Plant in Embryo, during its Confinement, and till it has ſufficiently vegetated in the Soil. The far greater Part of the Bulk of every Seed is appropriated to its Nutriment; for the living Principle is exceedingly minute, and, in ſome of the ſmaller Seeds, not diſcernable by the naked Eye. There are many Kinds of Seeds, which are themſelves too ſmall to be ſeen; and their reſpective *Germina* are not even a fiftieth Part of thoſe little Subſtances. Yet theſe burſt into Life, by divine Appointment, and

and afford a uſeful Produce for Man and Beaſt..

And are not the Seeds (if one may ſo call them) of the greateſt Events as ſurprizingly minute, and as little analogous to what they produce; as the *Germen* of an Acorn, which is ſcarce equal to the Head of a Pin, is to the Form and Bulk of a full grown Oak? What could be more apparently inadequate to the Deſign of ſaving *Iſrael* and half the Eaſtern World from Famine, than the Sale of *Joſeph* for a Slave, and his Impriſonment for above two Years in *Egypt*? What more improbable Means, to human View, for his Advancement to the higheſt Dignity next a Throne, than his long Series of Depreſſion and Hardſhip; or the immediate Occaſion of it, his unfolding the Dreams of two Wretches in diſgrace like himſelf? Where was the Proſpect of a River iſſuing from a Rock, only by the Stroke of *Moſes*'s Rod? How improbable was the Support of *Elijah* by hungry, ravenous, Birds? ——We might enter upon a long Detail from ſacred and profane Hiſtory to illuſtrate this remarkable Truth, which, if we open our Eyes, we may read alſo in every Tree and Plant about us, from the Moſs

upon the Wall to the talleſt Cedar in *Lebanon.*

But ſublime and important Leſſons of Grace alſo may be drawn from theſe providential Objects, by the watchful and attentive Believer. He reads all theſe Characters of the Divine Impreſſion in their *ſacred* Meaning. To him they are *Apples of Gold ſet in Lattices*, Net-work, or tranſparent Caſes, *of Silver.* They are bright only as Silver to the World, which views them careleſsly and at a Diſtance; but to his prying Eye of Faith the interior Gold, the rich and ſpiritual Import, appears in its glorious Luſtre. He learns, from theſe Things, that he is to confide in his Father's Love in all Circumſtances; that he is not to enter upon the Scale of Probabilities reſpecting the Accompliſhment of GOD's Promiſes, but to depend upon him for the declared Event, leaving the Means to his Diſpoſal; and that, as the Lord is able of the very *Stones to raiſe up Children unto Abraham*, ſo he can produce the Fulfilment of his Word by the moſt contrary Cauſes, and even without any Cauſe at all. Worldly Hearts ſtagger here, and ſay; "O then we may ſit with "our Arms acroſs at this Rate, and have "only

"only to believe."—*Only* to believe! If they knew what this meant, they would ſee, that they might as ſoon make another World, as believe aright of themſelves. What an incomprehenſible Buſineſs was the Crucifixion of a poor, forſaken, Out-caſt, to the chief Prieſts and Scribes among the Jews, and to ſuch learned Men as *Porphyry*, *Celſus*, *Julian*, &c. among the Gentiles? *He ſaved others* (ſaid they in a Taunt) *himſelf he cannot ſave. Let* this mighty *King of Iſrael deſcend now from the Croſs, that we may ſee and believe.* —"A crucified God (ſaid the Gentiles), "what an Abſurdity? How is he to ſave "*us*, when he could not reſcue *himſelf* "from a Parcel of contemptible Jews?" Human Reaſon could never have ſeen of itſelf, that, for this very End, Chriſt came into the World; that, by theſe very deſpicable Means, he was to accompliſh the higheſt Purpoſe, which GOD had deſigned; and that, by this ſeemingly oppoſite Circumſtance of Death, he was to introduce Life into the World and Myriads of Souls from the World into Life eternal. To Man's Senſe, all this muſt be the moſt unlikely Affair, that ever appeared. Yet this certain Fact is confirm-

ed by every Sort of Evidence, circumſtantial and direct; by the whole Series of divine Providences from the Beginning of the World; by all the Prophecies in antient Times; by all the Ceremonies of the Law, which were really Prophecies in Types and Emblems; by Eye-witneſſes and Ear-witneſſes without Number; by indiſputable Miracles, and other Tokens of divine Approbation; and by (what indeed is a noble Evidence to the real Chriſtian, though to none beſide) the Operation of God's Grace and Love within the Soul. Chriſt himſelf deſcribes this aſtoniſhing Effect of his Redemption by comparing himſelf to a *Corn of Wheat*, which obtains its wonderful Renovation of Life by the Death of its outward Subſtance, and ſeems to ſtart into Being, almoſt from the very Loſs of Being. *Except a Corn of Wheat* (ſays he) *fall into the Ground, and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much Fruit.* From him, as the great Seed, the only Principle of Life, do vegetate ſpiritually the living Branches, all the true Believers in the World. Almoſt under this Image was he graciouſly promiſed to the Church of old. Thus we may read the 17th Verſe of

of the lxxii Pſalm; *His Name ſhall exiſt for ever;* HE THAT WILL BE A SON *ſhall be his Name before the Face of the Sun* [through all Nature which the Sun enlightens]; *and all Nations ſhall be bleſſed in him and ſhall call him bleſſed.* It is difficult to convey the full Idea of this aſſumed Name. It is a collective Word, or Noun of Multitude, including the Iſſue or Progeny, as a Seed doth the Trunk and Branches of a Tree. Admirably it expreſſes the Incluſion of the Redeemed in Chriſt, as their great living Head or Seed, their Derivation from and entire Dependence upon Him. O what a manifold Inſtruction doth all this contain for thy Heart, O Believer, to commit thy Way unto the Lord without Reſerve, and to truſt in him at all times! He hath ſaid, *I will never leave thee nor forſake thee;* but will *make all Things*, probable and improbable, *work together for* thy *Good.*

XIII. THE World would be a Wilderneſs, were it not for Cultivation, and produce Nothing for the Comfort or Subſiſtence of Man.

AND what is poor Man's Heart, without the Culture of the ſpiritual Huſband-

man? A worſe, a more barren and noxious Deſart, than any he can tread upon with his Feet. *The Ground was curſed for his Sake*, and hath ſince brought forth Thorns and Thiſtles in Abundance, in Token of the ſpiritual Evils, which his Fall hath introduced within. From that Period, his Nature, once fertile for GOD, became a Wilderneſs and *the Habitation of Dragons:* And it can no more aſſume a better Form, by its own Vigor, than a Deſart can change its Soil, or a Waſte afford the Vegetation of a Field. GOD hath undertaken this arduous Work in him and for him. He, who created at firſt, to this End creates anew. He alone cauſes this Wilderneſs of the human Heart to *rejoice and bloſſom as the Roſe.* Though it was once dry and *parched Ground*, the ſpiritual Huſbandman converts it *into a Pool*, or *raiſes Springs* of Grace to ſaturate and repleniſh, to fructify and delight. This is his Promiſe; *I will plant in the Wilderneſs, the Cedar, the Shittah-tree, and the Myrtle, and the Oil-tree: I will ſet in the Deſart the Fir-tree, the Pine, and the Box-tree together; that they may ſee, and know, and conſider, that the Hand of the* LORD *hath done this, and the* HOLY ONE *of Iſrael*

rael hath created it. (Iſa. xli. 19, 20.) And again; *Inſtead of the Thorn ſhall come up the Fir-tree, and inſtead of the Briar ſhall come up the Myrtle-tree, and it ſhall be to the* LORD *for a Name, for an everlaſting Sign that ſhall not be cut off.* (Iſa. lv. 13.) This is a rich Promiſe of Grace under the Symbols of Nature. If we were to tranſlate the Paſſage into our Mode of ſpeaking, and looked through the Metaphor, it might be by the following Paraphraſe. —" In the Soul of Man, *barren* of all " Goodneſs, Happineſs, and Hope, I " will plant ſuch Graces, as ſhall *teſtify* " *my Praiſe*, be *incorruptible* in their Na- " ture, *fragrant* with Delight, and abund- " ant in *Holineſs* to my Honor: In his " Heart, *void* of all ſpiritual Life, ſhall " ariſe the Excellencies of a *ſublime Af-* " *fection, fruitful Converſation*, and *ever-* " *laſting Life.* All this *can* be done by " me alone; and I *will* do it for my " Glory." *Again;* " Inſtead of vile and " offenſive Tempers, ſhall appear an ex- " alted and edifying Renewal of Mind, " and, inſtead of groveling and worthleſs " Inclinations, ſhall ſpring up, in the re- " deemed Soul, all that is beautiful in " Holineſs, all that is delightful for Praiſe.

" The

"The LORD hath *fixed* it for everlasting;
"nor shall this purchased Blessing, or any
"of its Objects, ever fail."—This seems to be the correlative Doctrine of the Trees. To which let it be only added, that, as they appear to have been all Evergreens, they further represent, with admirable Fitness, those undecaying *Gifts*, and that holy *Calling*, *which are without Repentance*.

SPRING.

AS *Winter* seemed the Death; so *Spring* appears the Resurrection of the Creation. It has been supposed by some, that, but for the Fall of Man, the World would have been delighted with perpetual Spring, and that the Change of Seasons has been appointed as a Part of human Punishment, inflicted by a Variation of the original Constitution, Motion, and Position of the Globe. They have been led to conclude, (as Perfection admits of no Change) that, at the first Formation of the Earth, the most exquisite Spring

Green'd

Green'd all the Year; and Fruits and
Bloſſoms bluſh'd,
In ſocial Sweetneſs, on the ſelf-ſame
Bough.

However this may be; upon the Dawn of this Seaſon, what an exhilarating Beauty and Delight pervade the Face of Nature? An univerſal Gaiety chears both the animal and the vegetable World. Every Species of Being, wakened into Newneſs of Life, puts forth its reſpective Acts, and energizes to diſplay the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of the great Creator. The Fields are covered with the richeſt Verdure, which at once gladdens and improves the Organs, by which it is ſeen. The Flowers, in a thouſand various and incomparable Tints, which the Art of Man can but remotely mimic, and which throw the moſt glowing Splendors of a *Solomon* into Shade, diſcover the ſurpaſſing Excellence of an Almighty Hand. The Birds are rich in Melody and loud in Song. They all combine to ſwell "the "Symphony of Spring." The Poet attempts to celebrate the varied Wonders of this fragrant Time, and has been happy to paint only an hundredth Part of the Beauties,

Beauties, which clothe the animated Scene. Hence indeed are gathered, and may be gathered without End, Subjects for Action, Meditation, and Praiſe, by all that can ſee, or move, or think; but chiefly by thee, O Believer in JESUS, who art privileged to read theſe living Hieroglyphics with enlightened Eyes, and to apply them, in a Senſe far above the Reach of Nature, to thine own Comfort, and thy Saviour's Praiſe. Thou art capacitated to peruſe Characters, unſeen by the carnal Eye, though impreſſed upon every Leaf, and Plant, and Tree—Characters divinely drawn, and Leſſons ſublimely written, of infinite Importance and Delight. Read the beautiful Tranſcripts of thy Maſter's Loving-kindneſs and Mercy, and (like the ſilent and attentive *Mary*) *treaſure them up in thy Heart.*

Canſt thou behold the beautiful Spring recovered from the Winter's Froſt, or ſee the Face of the Earth every where renewed, without viewing a ſenſible Type and Demonſtration of that regenerating Life, with which GOD hath quickened thee from *the Death of Treſpaſſes and Sins?* Chriſt was born in the Depth of Winter, and perhaps to ſhew to Man, that he is naturally born

in

in Winter too—in the Winter of GOD's Wrath and of his own Alienation from GOD. He hath removed the Keenneſs of this Winter, and introduced an everlaſting Spring:—He hath mercifully introduced this Spring into thy Soul. Hence ariſe the Bloſſoms, the Verdure, the Fruits of Grace. Perceiving this glorious Change, thy Heart is full of Wonder and Love; and thou art burſting forth in the ſeraphic Ardor of the Prophet, *How great is his Goodneſs! how great is his Beauty!* Dead as thou once wert in Treſpaſſes and Sins, now thou art all alive to GOD, and art calling upon every Member of thy Body, and upon every Faculty of thy Soul, to celebrate his Mercy and to *make his Praiſe glorious*. This is the Dawning of GOD's eternal Spring. Ere long thou ſhalt enter the full Blaze of uncreated Glory, and taſte, and ſee, and enjoy, in the Realms of Bliſs, what mortal Eye hath not ſeen, Ear heard, or Heart conceived, below.

II. THE Earth cannot recover itſelf from Winter; but GOD alone, according to his Conſtitution of Things, effects it by an Act of his ſovereign Power.

NOR

NOR can the Soul of Man ſpring forth into ſpiritual Life, but by the vivifying Agency of the Spirit of GOD. The true Chriſtian is born, *not of Blood, nor of the Will of the Fleſh, nor of the Will of Man, but of GOD.* The ſame Omnipotence, which gave all the Creatures their natural Being, muſt give him his ſpiritual Being. That almighty Word which ſpake, and all Things were made, can only make him, by his energetic Voice, a new-born Soul. 'Tis GOD alone effects

——— *the ſecond Birth*
Of Heaven, and Earth. Awakening Nature hears
His new-creating WORD, *and ſtarts to Life.*

And much Quietneſs and Aſſurance of Spirit reſult from this to the believing Mind. For,

III. AS the Spring does not change to the other Seaſons, but is preſerved, with invincible Certainty, in its own Order;

So the Soul, which is truly *born of God*, is never unborn of Him. He cannot be now an Heir of Grace, and hereafter a Subject

Subject of the Devil. As a Man, once alive in the natural World, cannot become a Non-entity, or change himſelf into an Elephant or other Beaſt; or as a Plant of one Kind cannot drop its own Properties, and aſſume thoſe of an heterogeneous Nature; without putting into Confuſion the invariable Law of the whole Creation, which has fixed the *Genus* and *Species* of every Animal and Plant: So the Spirit, which is once regenerated and born of the Holy Ghoſt, cannot loſe that divine Nature, of which it partakes, and which is its inherent Life as a Child of GOD, without breaking the whole Conſtitution and Decree of Grace, which, being ordained for higher and more important Ends, muſt ſurely be at leaſt as invariable and irrefragable as that of Nature. When the Sun riſes, it doth not go back again, but paſſes on to the Meridian and from thence to the Weſt, without the leaſt Delay or Alteration. And if this Order were not ſettled in ſpiritual, as well as natural Things; upon what Ground could the Apoſtle mention to Believers the *ſtrong Conſolation*, which, he aſſures them, is the undoubted Privilege, that GOD hath appointed for them?—In ſhort, if Men would read the

Word

Word and Works of God more, and perplex themſelves leſs with the corrupt Reaſonings of their own Minds; we ſhould have fewer Diſputes upon this Subject, becauſe the Evidences of this Truth appear written both in the Word and upon the Face of all Things.

The Spring not only exhibits the important Doctrine of *Regeneration*, but alſo the *final Reſurrection* of the Dead. Here we may admire and adore *the manifold* or *multiform Wiſdom of GOD.* In a wonderful Combination of Ideas, all agreeing as reciprocal Parts of one Truth within themſelves, he ſcatters the Rays of his Wiſdom outwards to Man, various as the Colors they form in their Appearance and different likewiſe in the Deſign; and then concentrates, unites, and reſolves them all again into his own everlaſting Glory, and the Felicity of his Creatures. He can ſpeak of Heaven and Earth by the ſame Word, and deſcribe both the viſible and inviſible Effects of his Grace by the ſame Thing. His Wiſdom is not only *multiform*, but of *every Form.* All Forms, ideal, natural, and ſpiritual, expreſs this Wiſdom, exiſt by it, and in it are one.

He

He is their *Alpha* and *Omega*, the Beginning of all Things, and their End.

IV. TO ſee all vegetable Nature burſting forth into new Life, and aſſuming its beautiful Appearance on the Approach of Spring, would aſtoniſh any Perſon with Wonder and Delight, who had never beheld or heard of the charming Scene. From a State of Torpor and apparent Death, every Plant, by the inſcrutable Operation of GOD, dilates its Subſtance into its proper Leaves, and exhibits the Luſtre of its peculiar Flowers. The general Vegetation is no leſs rapid than delightful, and fills the Air with Perfume as well as the Eye with Beauty. The whole inanimate Creation ſeems to glow with Joy; and all the animal Tribes, according to their ſeveral Ranks and Deſignations, teſtify aloud the jocund Senſations which they feel.

WHAT a lively Type is this of the general Awakening of the Bodies, redeemed to an eternal Life? GOD, who made them originally from the Duſt, ſhall then raiſe them from the Duſt again. Nothing ſhall remain in the corrupted Earth, but what was corrupt and impure. The Body of the Chriſtian, like that of the Infidel, fell indeed a *natural Body*, tainted with Sin and groſs

groſs with Diſeaſe; but ſhall riſe up a *ſpiritual Frame*, meet for the Reception of that holy and ſublime Spirit, which is to reſide in it for ever. (Eph. ii. 22.) The Believer will be the *ſame* Being, though he will exiſt in a *different Mode* of Being. So *Jeſus* was the ſame God-man before his Reſurrection, as afterwards; but when his human Nature was fully glorified upon finiſhing the important Work of Salvation, that ſame human Nature had a new Kind of Subſiſtence. It could pierce through ſolid Matter, like the moſt ſublimated Spirit; and when all *Doors were ſhut*, inviſible to the Sight, unperceived by the Ear, unobſtructed by the Walls of the Apartment and even by the Bodies of his Diſciples, he *ſtood in the Midſt*. Juſt ſuch ſhall be the rarified Bodies of the Redeemed; for they ſhall be *like* their exalted Maſter in all Things; and, though now vile and depraved, ſhall then receive the *Faſhion of his moſt glorious Body, according to the Working* of his Almighty Power. They will change the *Manner* of their Being, but not their *Being* itſelf. When Corruption is extinguiſhed within them, which is not eſſential but adventitious only to their Nature; they will become pure

pure and ſpiritual.—Then ſhall appear the rapturous Scene of Heaven's everlaſting Spring; then ſhall be heard the extatic Melodies of the Bleſt; then ſhall be felt thoſe ineffable Delights, which no mortal Eye hath ſeen, Ear heard, or Thought conceived—Is this the Proſpect, O my Soul! and ſhall I not long to ſee it? Shall I not look over the low Impediments of Sickneſs, Sorrow, and Death, and cry out; *Come, Lord Jeſus; come quickly!*—He will come; he will not tarry; he will bleſs thee for evermore.

But there are ſome *among us*, as well as among the wiſe *Corinthians* of old, who ſay, *That there is no Reſurrection of the Dead.* And yet, if there be Truth in God or his Word, the conſtant Return of the Spring is not more ſure. What ſhould we think of a Man's Underſtanding, who, looking upon the dreary Face of the Earth in the Midſt of Winter, ſhould poſitively aſſert the phyſical Impoſſibility of a ſucceeding Spring? And he might argue with full as much Plauſibility from the Death, Corruption, and inactive State of the Objects about him, againſt the Hope of a new Vegetation, as an Infidel can reaſon againſt the Reſurrection

rection of the Body. They both would object upon one common Principle—a Doubt of the Power of God, and a Diſbelief of his Conſtitutions. Indeed, in the former Caſe, the Ordination of God returns upon the Senſes and Experience of Men ſo frequently, that, while they might doubt, the Succeſſion of the Seaſon would confute them. But ſtill there is not an Argument, which they can uſe againſt the Reſurrection, but which may be turned, allowing for the Difference of the Objects, as ſtrongly againſt the Revival of the Spring. The Apoſtle, therefore, in the moſt excellent Series of Deduction which ever was penned, has taken one very powerful Inſtance from the Effects of the Spring, to ſhew the Nature, as well as Neceſſity, of our corporal Reſurrection from the Dead. (1 Cor. xv. 35—44.)

Could we admit for a Moment, that there will be no Reſurrection; what is the Conſequence?—One almoſt too fearful to relate! It is briefly this: All the Book of God is falſe from Beginning to End; all the Promiſes made to the Patriarchs; all their Expectation and Deliverances, with all the Mercies they reckoned up and were careful to deliver down

to

to Poſterity; are all in vain. All the prophetic Ordinances, given to the antient Church; all the moſt beautiful Types, framed with ſo much Wiſdom and Propriety as even to ſurprize us now, and calculated to ſhadow forth heavenly and ſpiritual Purpoſes, are become Abſurdities in themſelves, and *lying Vanities* too, becauſe they were ſaid to be directed from God. All the conſequent Obſervation of thoſe Rites, Meditation upon them, and Learning in them, expreſsly enjoined by the Law, for Ages; and all the Faith and Hopes of holy Men, from the Beginning of the World, are altogether come to nought, and ſunk in Oblivion. Ten thouſand Times ten thouſand Sacrifices, inſtituted as Implorations of Mercy through the Blood of a Redeemer; and innumerable Millions of Prayers, have been offered up to a miſtaken Object of Worſhip, and therefore offered to nobody for nothing. All the wonderful Appearances and Interpoſitions of Providence (as they were underſtood), and all the Enjoyment of Promiſes from Heaven fulfilled, have been only Matters of mere Chance, which the impious Piety of Men have converted into holy Frauds. In vain have Apoſtles

Apoſtles preached, and in vain have Martyrs ſhed their Blood. All the Prophets were Liars, and their Inſpirations vile Deceit. Nothing ever came to paſs, which they predicted; or, if it did, it was only the Reſult of mere Gueſs. Of courſe, their Prophecies of the *Meſſiah*, and of the Riſe and Fall of Empires and States at particular Periods, (notwithſtanding the concurrent Evidence of Hiſtory both ſacred and profane) have been vile Impoſitions upon the Senſe and Experience of Mankind. All that Chriſt claimed to be, all that he did or ſuffered, with all the Wonders and Miracles wrought by himſelf and his Apoſtles, were infamous Pretences and abominable Deluſions. The Hiſtory, therefore, which recounts them in the New Teſtament, and the Hiſtory of thoſe Times, written both by Chriſtian and Heathen Authors, were abſolute Fables. In ſhort, there is no ſuch Thing as Hiſtory in the World. We are in a Maze of Doubt and Uncertainty; the greateſt Unbeliever is the trueſt Believer; and the moſt unſettled Scepticiſm muſt be the moſt certain Religion. There is, in a word, neither Redeemer, nor Redemption; no Reality in the Relation of Things;

no

no Evidence in our Senſes; no Hope in Life or Death; no Heaven or Immortality; no Providence, Wiſdom, or Truth, in all that *is*, or all that appears *to be*: But the whole Medley of Things is a mere Illuſion, and the very Being of God a Lye.—This is the noble Creed of thoſe, who renounce the Goſpel: A Creed, which, if aſhamed to own, they muſt neceſſarily hold; and ſo, to avoid what they think the Abſurdity of Chriſt's Reſurrection, and the Reſurrection of his People, they plunge themſelves into this Chaös, this Abyſs of Abſurdities; and, without Faith to receive the Truth, they have a Credulity which can ſwallow every Thing beſide. Yet this is the Sum of the World's Wiſdom, which rejecteth the Simplicity of the Goſpel. Lift up thine Heart, Believer, and bleſs GOD that from this *horrible Pit* thou art ſaved!

V. WE have conſidered the two important Doctrines of the Spring,—the Regeneration of the Soul, and the Reſurrection (or Regeneration) of the Body. But this Seaſon of Spring preaches alſo many other excellent Truths, which tend to our Edification and Improvement. Let us there-

fore attend to the Leſſons, which God inculcates by his Works and his Word.

One great Uſe of the Leaves of Plants is to imbibe Air and Moiſture for the Increaſe of their Structure, and particularly for the Formation of the Buds, which are the Branches, in Embryo, or the Stems of future Fruits and Flowers. Theſe Leaves are full of Veſſels, which are properly ramified for the Reception, Digeſtion, and Circulation of the vegetable Juices; and conſequently, without them, no Plant could obtain Health or Increaſe. Every Vegetable has alſo its peculiar Leaf, conſtructed either broad or narrow, ſmooth or indented, fine or thick, as will beſt anſwer to ſupport its particular Fabric: And, when the full Supply is effected, they fall off and diſappear.

Like theſe are all the Diſpenſations of God's Providence and Grace to Man. They are calculated, with the utmoſt Exactneſs, for the preſent Advantage or future Glory of his People. They can no more flouriſh without his momentary Suſtentation, than a Plant can proſper for a Moment without Air and Moiſture. Nor could they receive this ſpiritual Support, without Faculties ſpiritually prepared for it.

it. In ſuch a Caſe, they would not be benefited by all the Bleſſings of material or ſpiritual Nature; as the dead Trunk of a Tree has no Capacity of circulating or digeſting the natural Fluids about it. Every Believer has alſo a particular Diſpenſation, a peculiar Faculty aſſigned to him, which is fitted for the Purpoſe he is to anſwer in this World, or to prepare him for another. All good People are not ſmooth People. There is many a rough Leaf in the Garden of God. But theſe anſwer ſome wiſe Purpoſe of the Lord, though they are not very pleaſant either to the Eye or Hand of Man. Some of theſe are commonly uſed, like *Luther*, againſt the Foes of the Church. The Underſtandings and Capacities alſo of Believers are broad or narrow, as ſuits their Order, Place, or Purpoſe. There are many ſlender Leaves, whoſe Plants, were they broad, would be encumbered with the Weight of their Moiſture, or oppreſſed by the Fury of the Wind. So a narrow Comprehenſion often eſcapes Error, where a Mind of greater Compaſs is borne down by it entirely. In ſhort, every Sort of Faculty is only a Bleſſing, as the Lord makes it and keeps it.—The ſame may be

ſaid of all providential Diſpenſations. The broad or narrow Leaves of Riches or Poverty, the rough or ſmooth Foliage of Sorrow or Joy, are all ſuited aright, are all Bleſſings in their Time and Place, according to the divine Ordination. They laſt as long, as is neceſſary to the Object; and then (as none of GOD's Works are in vain) they withdraw and diſappear. The Wiſdom of Grace ſeeks not their Removal for carnal Eaſe or ſelfiſh Viewes, but the Accompliſhment of GOD's Purpoſe and Glory by them, without which the Soul would be deprived of its true and laſting Intereſt. If this Point of Wiſdom could be well eſtabliſhed in the Chriſtian's Heart, he would eſcape ten thouſand Pangs of Sorrow.

VI. 'TIS a neceſſary Precaution uſed in the Garden, to ſet out the ſeveral Species of Plants, which are deſigned for Seed, very carefully by themſelves; leſt the *Farina fœcundans*, or ſeminal Duſt, of any degenerated Plants in their Neighbourhood, be ſcattered upon the *Matrices* of their Bloſſoms, and thereby degenerate the whole future Plantation.

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In every Senſe, *evil Communications corrupt good Manners.* In the Education of Youth, no Prudence is to be omitted, in removing, as far as poſſible, the Contagion of ill Examples. All our Senſes have that ſympathetic Turn in them, which diſpoſes us to an Aſſimilation with thoſe, with whom we chiefly converſe: And Experience has proved, that, if our Affections are once carried away by any particular Perſons or Objects, our Reaſon and Imagination, as well as the ſubordinate Faculties of the Soul, generally become ſubject to their predominate Vices or Paſſions. If we conſider the Matter in a *ſpiritual* View, we ſhall find that the Command to God's People is, *Come out from among* the Evil doers, *and be ye ſeparate.* If a Chriſtian live much with Men of the World, *he* muſt imbibe *their* Spirit, or *they* muſt receive *his.* If otherwiſe, the Complacency between them will ſoon be broken. He may and indeed ought to carry on the particular Allotment of Providence with them in Buſineſs, or human Affairs, or elſe he muſt (as the Apoſtle ſpeaks) be actually *out of the World:* But here reſts the Difference; though he *tranſacts* with the World, he does not *enjoy* with

the World. His Affections are not with them; for his Views and Hopes, like his Head and Heart, are lifted above the Earth: His *Feet* only touch, and, while they touch, they trample upon the Ground. As a *Man*, he muſt live with Men in all the common Offices of Humanity. But, as a *Chriſtian*, he lives with his GOD; and one great Point of his Happineſs and Duty conſiſts, in living *above* the World, and as much as may be in a ſpiritual *Abſtraction* from it. If a Plant incline to the Earth, we drive a Stake by it, and tie it up, or elſe it would rot upon the Soil: And ſhall we wonder therefore, when GOD's Plants are prone to kiſs the Ground, and to reſt upon the Dirt, that their Inclination is hedged up with thorny Providences, that ſome rugged Bar is fixed cloſe to their very Roots, and that they are tied up faſt by Afflictions or Diſeaſe?

VII. IN the Spring, that curious Operation called Grafting is practiſed by the Nurſery-man upon the ſeveral wild Stocks, appointed for that Purpoſe.

As the Life of the Year begins at this Seaſon, ſo commonly in Youth (the Spring-time of Man) doth GOD engraft the Life of

of the Soul. We are, ſince the Fall, all wild Stocks, by Nature, bearing Thorns as well as Leaves, or at beſt uſeleſs and ungrateful Fruit. The Lord cuts off the luxuriant Branch, cleaves its very Heart, and inſerts where he has cleaved, the ſmall Scion or Shoot of his Grace. He binds it faſt, and defends it from the hoſtile Inclemencies around, till the Contact is duly formed, and the Tokens of Life, like the protruding Buds and Bloſſoms, begin to appear in the Soul.

VIII. THE Nurſery-man chuſeth his Stocks for grafting according to his own Mind, and paſſeth by others at his Pleaſure.

God likewiſe ſelects his *Trees of Righteouſneſs*, according to the Purpoſe of his own unerring Decrees. They are planted, they are grafted, they are made fruitful; agreeable to the Motives of that Wiſdom, which cannot but order what is right, holy, juſt, and good; and conſonant with the Impreſſions of that Power, which can never be fruſtrated or over-ruled. Thus ſaith Chriſt to his Diſciples, *Ye have not choſen me, but I have choſen you, and ordained you, that you ſhould go* forward, *and bring forth*

Fruit, and that your Fruit ſhould remain. (John xv. 16.)

IX. WHEN a Tree is grafted, the old Stock is not ſuffered to ſhoot out and bear Fruit; but its wild Branches, which are ever budding forth, and eſpecially in young Trees, are cut off with Attention and Care. Thus, though the old Nature remain, it is kept under and ſubdued; while the good Branch alone is ſuffered to flouriſh and produce.

In the Chriſtian, though Grace be grafted into his Soul, his old carnal Nature remains juſt as it was before. It is of itſelf, as it ever was, *carnal, ſenſual, deviliſh.* It produces no good Fruit, and can produce none. A Thiſtle might as ſoon afford a Fig, or the Thorn a Grape. The Spirit of God, therefore, nips its ſhooting Branches, when they appear; leſt they ſhould exhauſt the Vigor and Sap of the Tree. Were they let alone, they would ſoon deſtroy the moſt valuable Part of the Plant. The Knife of the Law, with its Sharpneſs of Duty and Command, is moſt rigorouſly to be applied here, both to cut down and keep down the luxuriant Excreſcences of Sin.

Thus

Thus the old Nature being ſuppreſſed daily *with its Affections and Luſts*, the new engrafted Nature is permitted only to riſe, and flouriſh, and bring forth *the Fruits of Righteouſneſs, which are by Chriſt Jeſus, to the Glory of God.* By this Cultivation of the heavenly *Huſbandman*, the Plants are *made* holy, and *kept* holy. In their new Nature, they would not ſin, if they could: In their old Nature, they muſt not ſin, if they would. By the one, they commit no Sin, becauſe as a divine Nature, it is born of God, is grafted into Chriſt, and abideth in him. (1 John iii. 6.) By the other, Sin cannot have Dominion, becauſe they are crucified with Chriſt, and are circumciſed by him; in other Words, he cuts off their natural Branches and their evil Fruits, whenever they appear. By this conſtant Operation, (for this is a conſtant Work) the carnal Nature is kept down, and the ſpiritual Nature riſes up; ſo that the whole Man, from a barren or evil Tree, becomes a fruitful and a good one, thrives in Grace, ſpreads to an appointed Stature, and at laſt is tranſplanted to Glory.

X. IN the Spring, all the Fruit-trees are covered with Bloſſoms, and make a

moſt ſplendid Appearance; but, when the Winds blow and the Rains beat, only thoſe whoſe Fruit is kernelled within them, remain for Maturity. In the Kernel is that Principle of Life, without which, however minute beyond Conception at firſt, all the reſt is mere Bulk, and for the Support of which, both Flower and Fruit are conſtructed.

AN EXPRESSIVE Symbol this of the State of GOD's Church below! When "Religion walks (as one expreſſes it) in "her golden Slippers," her Attendants are numerous, and her Admirers not a few. But let her once appear, like her Maſter, forlorn and rejected of Men, without the Credit of the World, and without a Place in it where to lay her Head; her unreal Votaries will fall off by Troops, and will find, with very little ſeeking, a thouſand Occaſions of Offence. (Mark iv. 17.) When Profeſſion becomes a Faſhion, like all other Faſhions, it will be followed. But when GOD lets looſe the Perſecutor's Arm, when his Winds of Trial are permitted to blow, and when to be a Chriſtian indeed is to be odiouſly ſingular; alas! how many fair Bloſſoms fall off to the Earth, and corrupt upon it as their

End

End and their all? How many, that once hung upon the Top of the Tree, or were the higheſt and loudeſt in the Chriſtian Profeſſion, have ſhrunk beneath the Root, and within a while have left their Place to be known no more? The View of this will touch our Feelings as Men, and ſhould teach us Humility as Chriſtians. *By Faith ye ſtand* (ſays the Apoſtle); and this *Faith is not of yourſelves; it is the Gift, and the Operation, of* GOD. Amidſt, then, all the Shipwrecks we have ſeen, not *of*, but *concerning* the Faith in the Minds of Men, we have a noble Eſtabliſhment to reſt upon from the divine Promiſes; *Nevertheleſs* [let all Things appear as they may] *the Foundation* [the Covenant and Decree] *of* GOD *ſtandeth ſure, having this Seal* [whoſe Legend on one Side is] THE LORD KNOWETH THEM THAT ARE HIS, *and* [on the other] LET EVERY ONE, THAT NAMETH THE NAME [or poſſeſſeth the Nature] OF CHRIST, DEPART FROM INIQUITY. One Side of this Seal of the Covenant is turned towards GOD, and is impreſſed inviſibly (but to him) upon every believing Soul; but the other Side lays open to all the World; and if the Tranſcript of it is not legible in the Profeſſor's Life and Converſation,

ſation, it is becauſe he is unſealed of GOD, and therefore *none of his*. The Lord alone knows his Redeemed by one Mark; but Heaven and Earth may know them by the other. Thus they are all *ſealed* (Rev. vii. 3), *ſealed to the Day of Redemption* (Eph. iv. 30), *and ſet as a Seal upon the Heart and the Arm of their Lord.* (Cant. viii. 6.) Their Fruit remaineth amidſt all the Blaſts and Trials of Time, and is brought to full Perfection in the heavenly *Eden*.

XI. EVERY Vegetable has its eſſential Oil, without which it could neither flouriſh nor live. Upon this Oil, which is extended through the Ramifications of every Plant, and without which it would be as dry and ſterile as the chemical *Caput mortuum*; the Rays of Light from the Sun act, generate by it that Motion through the Vegetable which is called its Life and Increaſe, and render it the Vehicle of all the imbibed Nouriſhment by which that Life and Increaſe are ſupplied.

IN like Manner, every true Believer has the Oil of Grace, and becauſe of the anointing of this Oil, which runs from the Head of the ſpiritual *Aaron* to the meaneſt of his Members, he is called a *Chriſtian*.

Chriſtian. He is not *a Chriſtian indeed,* without this Oil. The Uſe of this precious *Unction from the Holy One,* is to fit the Soul for the Impreſſion of thoſe Rays of Light from the Sun of Righteouſneſs, by which it grows and bears Fruit to the Glory of GOD. This glorious Sun might irradiate ten thouſand ſpiritual Worlds; yet, without this Oil, the Spirit of Man would not be the better for its Rays. It could neither proſper nor be happy. But having this ſpiritual Unction, the Soul has Communion with the Lord of Life, and grows, by his Light and Heat, in Wiſdom and Stature, according to the Meaſure of the heavenly Gift.

XII. AT this Seaſon of the Year, there is much to be done in the Field and Garden. Moſt of the Crops for the enſuing Autumn are now to be ſown; and great Care is uſually taken to ſuppreſs or deſtroy the riſing Weeds, which will ſpring up with all the uſeful Plants, and would injure, if not abſolutely choke up, the expected Produce.

So in the Huſbandry of GOD, the great Buſineſs of ſowing the Word or Seed of Life is uſually performed in the Spring-time

time of his People's Hearts. He then *breaks up* their *fallow Ground*, and begins the Preparation of their Souls for the Autumn of Glory. More rarely are his Redeemed called in riper Age; and ſuch of them, as are ſo called, more rarely ſtill arrive at that Height and Vigor of Grace, with which more early Converts are bleſſed, or produce equally excellent Fruit. In the youthful Part of Life, however, many riſe and luxuriant Weeds, many ſtrong and baleful Luſts, riſe up and *war againſt the Soul*. Theſe, but for the Providence and Grace of the ſpiritual Huſbandman, would ſoon over-run and prevail. Did not an inviſible Hand conduct the Redeemed in Youth, when Paſſions and Temptations eagerly ſolicit a League; they would be more expoſed to ſpiritual Dangers of every Kind, than while Infants they were liable to temporal Injuries without the Guard of a careful Eye. In Fact, GOD's People are all Infants, reſpecting the Need of his Protection, and therefore are uſually called his *Children*. Some, in reſpect of others, may indeed appear like *Fathers* and *young Men*; but they never aſſume their full Growth and become of Age, till they are releaſed from the

the Bondage and Burden of the Fleſh. Like the Field or Garden, they always want Culture and Care. They have a thouſand rank Weeds continually ſpringing up, which *Satan* hath ſown with a buſy Hand. Theſe are to be cut down from Day to Day. *Every Plant* (ſays the gracious Redeemer), *which my heavenly Father hath not planted, ſhall be rooted up.* He fulfills this bleſſed Word by the Agency of his Holy Spirit. Theſe Weeds of Corruption he watches now to ſuppreſs, and, when the Time of Harveſt ſhall come, will abſolutely deſtroy. He conſtantly nurtures, on the other Hand, the Plants of his Grace, *waters them every Moment*, attends them through all their Growth, and finally matures them for Heaven.

XIII. IN dry Spring-weather, the Earth, after ploughing, would run into hard Clods, ſo as not only to deform the Field, but to prevent in great Meaſure the Succeſs of a Crop. The induſtrious Huſbandman, therefore, at ſuch times, follows up the Plough with Rollers to break in pieces the larger Maſſes, and with Harrows to pulverize the whole Face of the Soil,

Soil, for the Reception of the Seed, which by theſe Means finds Nouriſhment when it firſt puts forth its tender Roots into the Ground.

The ſpiritual Huſbandman dealeth thus with the fallow Ground of his People's Hearts. He breaks them up firſt by the Plough of the Law, and follows the Conviction of Sin, through the Law, by weighty Oppreſſion of Spirit, and reiterated Trials of Soul, which break (as it were) in Pieces the Obduracy of Nature, and reduce it to a thorough Senſe of its own Littleneſs and Poverty. This he calls *bringing down their Heart with Labor.* (Pſalm cvii. 12.) Then the Seed of the Word grows faſt and well, takes deep Root downward and brings forth much Fruit upwards, to the Glory of God and the happy Edification of the Soul. An unbroken Heart is as little diſpoſed to yield the Fruits of Righteouſneſs, as an untilled Field a Crop of Corn. Neither Seed, nor Rain, nor Dew, can penetrate to purpoſe into the one, nor what theſe ſignify ſpiritually into the other.

XIV. Good Plants require Care and Cultivation; while Weeds thrive ſpontaneouſly

ly and ſpread themſelves quickly throughout the Soil.

ALL the Principles of Grace are *firſt* carefully ſown by the great Huſbandman, and *then* by him as carefully nurtured and improved. *He withdraweth not his Eye*, (Job xxxvi. 7.) from what his Hand hath wrought, nor ſuffers his Word of Grace to return unto him void, or without accompliſhing his Will. Too true indeed, will Vice and Sin ſpring up of themſelves, and require only to be *let alone* in order to cover the Soul. The Heart of Man, like the Ground on which he treads, is fitly diſpoſed for every baleful Production, and, like its Symbol the Earth, is *curſed with Thiſtles and Thorns*. The Chriſtian finds them to be ſuch, whenever he attempts to attack them: they lacerate his Fleſh, and give him many a painful Wound. He hath, however, this Comfort; the Spirit of the Lord ſhall e'er long conſume them all; and then *inſtead of the Thorn ſhall come up the Fir-tree, and inſtead of the Briar ſhall come up the Myrtle-tree, and it ſhall be to the Lord for a Name* [or Eſtabliſhment], *for an everlaſting Sign that ſhall not be cut off.* (Iſaiah lv. 13.)

XV.

XV. THE more delicate and tender the Plant, the greater is the Gardener's Watchfulneſs and Care over it

THIS but faintly expreſſes the infinite Attention of the Lord to the weak and feeble among his People. Could they perceive his kind Concern and underſtand his conſtant Love for them; how happy and reſigned in their Hearts, how holy and regular in their Lives, might they find themſelves privileged to be? He doth not *drive* the Lambs of his Flock before him, but he *gathers them with his Arm, and* (if they cannot walk) *he carries them*; nay, he carries them *in his Boſom*, cloſe to his Heart, *and gently leads thoſe that are with young.* (Iſaiah xl. 2.) Can the believing *Soul* doubt of his Love, who is all *Love*; of his Conduct, who is all *Wiſdom*; of his Ability, who is all *Strength*; of his Promiſe, who is all *Truth*; of his Fulneſs, who is *All in All*, and who hath all Things at his Diſpoſal?—Ponder this again and again, O my Soul, and ſay unto thyſelf, what thy Lord perhaps would ſay too; O Thou of little Faith, wherefore doſt Thou, wherefore didſt Thou, wherefore canſt Thou, doubt! Lord, I may juſtly have

have hard Thoughts of *myſelf*; but, after the Manifeſtation of ſo much Goodneſs and Mercy in Chriſt Jeſus, how can I have any hard Thoughts of *Thee!* O waſh me from a Sin, which not all the Unbelievers in the World, nor all the Devils in Hell, ever did or ever can commit! Deliver me from that Diſtruſt of thy Faithfulneſs, which I might not harbor perhaps againſt the Credit of one of my Fellow-worms!

XVI. YOUNG Trees, newly planted, are uſually defended from the Sun and Wind; too much of which would probably deſtroy them, before they have fully taken Root in the Ground.

AFTER this Similitude, doth the Lord defend the Children of his Grace from being over-borne with the Weight of Trial and Temptation. Till they are in ſome Degree eſtabliſhed in the Faith, the Heart is kept from much Oppreſſion, and generally enjoys much Conſolation. As *new-born Babes*, they have *the pure Milk of the Word*, ſomething ſoft and ſweet, *that they may grow thereby*. When they become older, they have Trials for their Teeth, many a hard Cruſt to digeſt, and many a ſcanty Bone to pick. But all is ordered

ordered well, and agreeable to the State of their Capacity and the Circumſtances of their Situation. No Stomach upon Earth could always ſubſiſt upon Sweetmeats. The great Feaſt of Comforts is reſerved for Heaven, where the Frame of the Believer will be perfectly fitted to receive and digeſt them.

XVII. TREES are obſerved to ſtrike the ſtronger Roots, and to lay hold faſter upon the Ground, from the Prevalence and Oppreſſion of high Winds.

'Tis the ſame in Grace. Adverſity and Temptation, withſtood by the Help of God, envigorate and eſtabliſh the Soul, and cauſe it to depend more ſimply and more ardently upon the *Strength of Iſrael.* In a gracious Senſe, as well as the moral, it would be a Diſadvantage not to have known Adverſity. Trials give the Believer convincing Views of his own Weakneſs and Inſufficiency, and lead him to lay hold upon the *everlaſting Strength* of his Redeemer. By laying hold of this Strength, he becomes ſtrong too; not in himſelf, but in the Lord alone, and *in the Power of his Might.* Hence the Apoſtle deduces a Series of moſt reviving Concluſions. *We rejoice* (ſays he) *in Hope of the Glory*

Glory of God. This Hope, employed upon Objects of Life and Immortality, would naturally excite Joy. *But not only ſo;* we can riſe above all the Powers of mere Reaſon and Senſation through the Strength of *Jeſus;* for it is our peculiar Privilege to *glory even in Tribulations alſo, knowing that Tribulation worketh,* leads to, induceth, *Patience* or conſtant Expectation; and this *Patience, Experience,* or an approving Trial of the Soul's Love to GOD, and of GOD's Love to the Soul; *and* this *Experience, Hope; and Hope maketh not aſhamed, becauſe the Love of God is ſhed abroad,* or poured out *in our Hearts, by the Holy Ghoſt which is given unto us.* (Rom. v. 2—5.) The Chriſtian begins with Hope; and all the Circumſtances, which can occur to his Fleſh or Spirit below, are meant to increaſe and eſtabliſh that Hope in him to the End. Thus the Trial of Faith is *precious:* And thus the Faithful become refined by Trial. They loſe none of their Gold: They can only drop their Droſs.

XVIII. In choice Trees, Care is taken that the Fruits do not hang too thick or cloſe together; for, otherwiſe, they would

be weak and ill-flavored, as well as injure the Vigor and Fertility of the Branches. A few well-grown and well-taſted Fruits are eſteemed more than Buſhels of puny or blighted Productions.

THUS, in the Chriſtian Life, it is the Wiſdom of Grace to produce its Fruits in proper Order, Time, and Situation. Not the *Quantity* only, but the *Quality* of good Works, is to be conſidered. Too much Fruit cannot be borne, if it be borne well. —There is an *Order* in all Things; and Chriſtians ſhould arrange all their Works of Piety, and even of temporal Vocation, in a proper Courſe; ſo that *one* Part of Duty may not claſh with or hinder *another*. In ſuch a Caſe, moſt probably *both* would be ill done.—*Time* alſo is to be conſulted. Much of Happineſs and Succeſs very frequently depends upon the well timing of our good Works. The Lord hath appointed an exact Time for all his Operations, and an exact Time (every ſeventh Day) for our more ſolemn Service of Him. And it is our higheſt Wiſdom to copy even the Shadow of his.—There is a ſuitable *Place* alſo for every Thing. What is right in one Situation, may be very wrong

wrong in another. A common Ploughman would be ridiculous, ſhould he pretend to teach the fine Arts; or a Man that could not read, the Sciences. It may be feared, that half the Errors in Divinity have ariſen from the bold Ignorance of Men, whoſe Views have led them, where their Buſineſs never found them. It is a great Duty, therefore, to arrange our Duties: And we ſhould pray for Wiſdom to arrange them well; that none may be in Confuſion, none out of Seaſon, none out of *their own* Place, or unbecoming *our's*. The Lord once made an aweful *Breach* in *Iſrael*, for a Want of Order. (1 Chron. xiii. 10. and xv. 13.) Let us, therefore, as true and wiſe Believers, look up to GOD, that we may be inſtructed and enabled, *what* to do, *how* to do, and *when* to do. The Lord regards all this in his Diſpenſations (Eccl. iii. 2.) and we ſhould diligently attend to this in all our Duties. We are leſs liable to repent of ſuch Preciſion, than to miſcarry without it.

XIX. THE Spring abounds with Flowers, which ſcatter in their ſubtle *Effluvia* a moſt grateful Perfume. Differ-

ent indeed are the Scents, and emulous (as it were) to exceed in Sweetneſs. The delightful Fragrance is diffuſed by every Breeze, and exhibits, to another Senſe of Man, the Vaſtneſs and Variety of his Maker's Bounty.

In the ſpiritual, no leſs than in the material, World do fragrant Spices flow. Theſe on Earth are the rich Graces of Holineſs and Praiſe, imparted by the Divine Spirit to the Believer's Soul. In theſe the Lord himſelf is ſaid to delight, and, ſpeaking after the Manner of Men, to enjoy *a ſweet ſmelling Savour.* Of this Holineſs and Thankſgiving, and of their Gratefulneſs to God, the odoriferous Offerings under the Law were but Types and Shadows. They were ſweet Odors to the Father, offered through the Son, and by the Power of the Holy Ghoſt. And as, both then and now, the Services and Gratitude of Believers were thus full of Fragrance; ſo their very Perſons are ſaid to be unto God *a ſweet Savour of Chriſt.* (2 Cor. ii. 15.) But if their Sacrifices of Praiſe be now ſo acceptable, aſcending from the midſt of ſo foul a Veſſel as this *vile Body* of Sin and Corruption; what muſt they be hereafter, when both Soul and

and Body ſhall be perfect in Holineſs, like the Body and Soul of the great Redeemer? Their *Vials* ſhall be *golden*, becauſe pure; and *full of Odors*, becauſe replete with Praiſe. Thus are the Graces in a Chriſtian fragrant to his GOD.—— They alſo ſhed a pleaſing Perfume to the rectified Senſe of Man. Nothing is more delightful to a believing Heart, than heart-felt Thankſgiving and Praiſe. It is a Foretaſte of Heaven, and an Anticipation of everlaſting Joy. Let a Breeze ariſe, let an Occaſion appear; and Chriſt's holy Garden muſt yield its precious Perfume. Well then may he command; *Awake, O North-wind, and come, thou South; blow upon my Garden, that the Spices thereof may flow out!* (Cant. iv. 16.)

XX. MANY Flowers, both in the Field and Garden, when the Light of the Sun is withdrawn, cloſe themſelves, as if aſleep, [the Botaniſts do term it the *ſomnus plantarum*] and remain in this State till the Light returns, by the Action of which they expand themſelves again, rejoicing (as it were) to refract its Rays in their beautiful Variety of Colors. Others again, when the Rays of Light act in par-

ticular Directions, hide their little Glories, as if aſhamed to dilate themſelves before the magnificent Splendor, which beams upon them.

In both Reſpects, theſe Flowers reſemble the Work of Grace in the Chriſtian. When the Light of Life beams ſtrongly on his Soul, it opens all his Affections and Faculties; and an eager Earneſtneſs is induced to receive this Light, to refract its Glories, and to communicate the delightful Effects of it to all around. The Believer rejoices in the Light of God's Countenance, in which his true Life conſiſts, and which is *better* to him than the natural. (Pſal. lxiii. 3.) He aims to ſhew its Excellence to others; and, being a Partaker of the heavenly Gift, his Soul is earneſt to *let his Light* so *ſhine before Men, that they may glorify his Father which is in Heaven.*

In the other View, when the Believer conſiders *himſelf* by the Manifeſtations of God's Light ſhining upon him, in which likewiſe he beholds the unutterable Glory and Holineſs of the Almighty Jehovah; he cannot but hide his diminiſhed Head in the humbleſt Contrition, and *abhor himſelf* (with *Job*) *in Duſt and Aſhes.* The Brightneſs of the Lord ſtuns all Compari-

ſon

ſon in the Creatures, who, if they are under its Impreſſions, muſt fall down, like the Bleſt above, deeply confeſſing that HE ONLY IS WORTHY.

Theſe Flowers, then, ſhould teach the Heart this double Leſſon; that it is our Privilege to rejoice in and glorify GOD, while it is our Duty to *walk humbly* before him. In the firſt caſe, we exalt him before Men; and, in the other, we magnify him within ourſelves. In both, we ſhall find the Effects of his Light,—Holineſs, Peace, Quietneſs, and Aſſurance for ever.

XXI. IN a well cultivated Garden there is a great Variety of Plants, which are fit for different Uſes through the ſeveral Seaſons of the Year. All of them are planted in *Places* proper for their Nature, and brought forward in the *Time* requiſite for Service. Plants, originally exotic, are not ſet out in a cold Expoſure; nor do the Eſculents, peculiar to the Spring, thrive and ſucceed in Autumn.

VARIOUS alſo are the Faculties and Deſignations of the People of GOD. Every one of them has his proper Place in the Church, and in the World. Some are evidently born to anſwer ſome great and parti-

cular Purpoſe; which being accompliſhed, they are taken to their Home. Others, though leſs evidently perhaps, are planted about upon Earth to effect the Ends of Providence and Grace, which, if ever ſo hidden, are not the leſs neceſſary or ſure. Theſe being anſwered, other Succeſſions of the Faithful ariſe, and, in the Agency of the ſame Divine Power, act and perform according to what GOD hath given them to do. There never was a Believer born for nothing, or for no particular Good, which would be equal to nothing. In their Day and Generation, all GOD's People have their reſpective Departments to fill; and *he* lives the moſt like a Chriſtian and honors GOD moſt, who fills his Station the beſt. The *Rank* of that Station is in the Hand of his Maker; and with this Rank he has nothing to do. His Object ſhould be to mind the *Purpoſe* of GOD in it, and to pray for ſtrength to accompliſh it. He will then find his own Place, and all the Circumſtances of it, the moſt happy and the very beſt that could have been provided for him. The Reaſon why People fret about their outward Circumſtances is—they are not living for GOD in them, but for themſelves; not

for

for the Purpoſe of his Glory, but for their own carnal Wills and Inclinations. They think thoſe Things *great*, which are but *little*; and make too *little* of thoſe, which are the *greateſt* of all. They have not laid down this for a Principle, that nothing is good, but as GOD makes it, to the Soul; and that the whole Earth, nay Heaven itſelf, would be an Evil without his Bleſſing. In ſhort, they ſeek to be their own Maſters and Managers, and (at the Bottom) leave GOD out of the Buſineſs. Such is the natural Apoſtaſy of all our Hearts; but GOD hath brought his Redeemed into Being at a right Time, hath fixed them in a right Place, and will cauſe them to anſwer a right End. *To every one* (ſays the wiſe Man) *there is a Seaſon, and a Time to every Purpoſe under the Heaven.* And *the Times and the Seaſons the Father hath put in his own Power*, ſaid one, who was wiſer than he. Let every Chriſtian, then, repoſe himſelf in the Will of GOD concerning him, follow faithfully wherever it leads, and act agreeable to it, to the utmoſt of his Power. He will find his Heart at Eaſe in this Way, but in no other Way beſide. It is heavenly Wiſdom to ſee the Hand of GOD in all Events; and

it is heavenly Grace to ſay over the moſt trying of them, *It is the* LORD; *let him do what ſeemeth him good.*

XXII. WHEN a Man takes a Farm, or cultivates a Garden; if he be prudent, he conſiders his Ability to ſtock the one, or his Strength to manage the other. Too great a Farm would ruin a poor Man. He could not exert the neceſſary Means to procure a Crop; and, of Courſe, what would have well ſupported ſome other Perſon of greater Capacity, will only plunge him unavoidably into Diſtreſs. So likewiſe a Garden, if the Strength employed in its Culture be not proportionate to its Size; ſome Parts at leaſt muſt be neglected, and moſt likely the Whole would be over-run with Weeds, or yield Productions of little or no Value.

SHOULD not this demonſtrate to Chriſtians the Folly of Covetouſneſs, and the Danger of large Poſſeſſions? As *a Man's Life doth not conſiſt in the Abundance of the Things which he poſſeſſeth*; ſo neither doth his *Happineſs*. The true Secret of *enjoying* the World, is to live *above* it; not to create earthly Wants, but to diminiſh theſe by a larger Income of ſpiritual Bleſſings;

ings; not to extend Deſire to a thouſand Objects, but to fix it on ONE, and, *in* that One, to enjoy all the reſt. The Heathen Philoſophers have made many ſenſible Reflections upon the Vanity of the World; but their Wiſdom failed, on the Point of uſing the World without abuſing it. They could talk of having the Heart looſe *from* the Earth, but they could not lift it *above* the Earth. They felt a Void within, and they perceived too, that the whole Earth could not fill it: And therefore, that they might not hunt a Shadow, they tried, to contract Deſire not to fulfil it, to reduce Senſation not to gratify it, to live without Enjoyment rather than to enjoy. They, and even *Epicurus* himſelf, placed Happineſs in *not wanting*, rather than in the poſitive *having*. The Chriſtian's Wiſdom mounts higher, and, inſtead of profeſſing a ſtoical Apathy, founded on rank Pride or Deſpair, aims to have the moſt exquiſite Senſibility, and to have that gratified chiefly with the true Enjoymant of the beſt Things, without being put off with the worſt. In other Words, the Grace of GOD in him, upon Proof of the Vanity and Wretchedneſs of all earthly Objects in themſelves, fills the

Heart with a ſtrong Deſire after thoſe inviſible Realities, which the Goſpel ſets before him, and which he has had ſome Foretaſte of in believing. He then begins to view, how unſeemly a Buſineſs it is for him, as a Chriſtian, to be *overcharged* with the Cares of this World, ſince he muſt ſhortly leave it, and ſhould always remember his Home to be ſomewhere elſe. Having thus made a right Eſtimate of all temporal Matters, his Soul is led up to GOD, as the only Source of Reſt and Comfort. Here he is ſtayed, and by him becomes ſteady. But ſtill having a Body in the World, and Buſineſs in the World, which Providence has ſet before him; he does it with all his Might, but in a very different Spirit from that which once engaged him. He looks upon his Avocation in the World as a Duty to GOD and Man, performs it diligently in this View, but leaves all Iſſues and Events to HIM who orders all for Good. He is relieved from Anxiety, in Proportion as he ſimply reſts upon the Will of GOD. And he enjoys with Comfort every Bounty, becauſe it flows from that Will, and is meant for his trueſt Good. The Meaſure or Quantity of this Bounty he leaves to his kind Provider,

Provider, whoſe Wiſdom, Love, and Power are engaged to do the beſt for him. Hence ariſes the Death of Covetouſneſs. He wants *ſuitable* Things, not *great* Things. His wiſh is to be *filled* rather than to be *loaded*. As ſomebody expreſſes it, "He "ſeeks not a *huge* Coat, which will fatigue "him to wear, but a *fit* Coat, which may "keep out the Cold." In this Frame of Spirit, how many Toils and Vexations he eſcapes, which others drudge through all their Days, and find no Reſt, nor Heaven, at laſt? His Ambition is to live with GOD in the World, and to enjoy what he has of the World in the Love of GOD. This Ambition finds a Reſt, and exults in it. All other Ambition, with the Envy which attends it, preys upon a Man's own Vitals, always eats up his Peace, and often his Being. It only, at the utmoſt, ſwells the Vanity of the human Heart "from a Vapour "to a Bubble." And as to thoſe, who *will be* rich and cry out for *Wealth, Wealth, by every Method Wealth*; what do they get with all their Gain? The Apoſtle tells us, *they fall into Temptation and a Snare*;—if the World and the Devil lay a Bait or a Trap, they are caught by it;—*and into many fooliſh and hurtful Luſts*;—yet they

think themſelves clever and cunning;—*which drown Men in Deſtruction and Perdition*;—Fine Gain truly! A large Farm, with a Crop of Thiſtles! A great Garden, choaked up with Weeds!

XXIII. WHEN the Farmer has manured his Field, ploughed it deep and ſowed it well; when the Seed is ſprung up, and promiſes fair for a plentiful Harveſt; it reſts entirely upon the Bounty of Providence, whether a Grain ſhall ripen, or a ſingle Sheaf be gathered into the Barn. A deſtructive Blight may ſeize the growing Stalk, or a parching Drought prevent it from growing. Exceſſive Rains may forbid the Harveſt, and tempeſtuous Winds lodge his Crop; ſo that it may rot like Dung upon the Ground. He only, who maketh the Corn to grow, and hath promiſed Seed-time and Harveſt, can give the Corn its Increaſe, and fill all Things living with Plenteouſneſs.

WHAT GOD performs by his Providence in the natural World, is a ſtrict Symbol of what his Grace effects in the ſpiritual. All our Cares as Men are thrown away, without the Energy of his Bleſſing: And his Bleſſing is often withheld, that Men may

may notice the Vanity of human Cares, and look beyond themſelves. Men are prone to lay great Streſs upon themſelves, or upon the Activity of others: But their Labor is loſt without God. If they ſeem even to accompliſh their Purpoſes, they cannot enjoy them. They get perhaps to the End of their Road, which appeared to terminate in a Sort of Elyſian Fields, where all was Harmony, Beauty, and Pleaſure: But, when they came there, a great Gulph, which 'till then was hidden, ſtops them from their fancied Delight; or, if they ſtill puſh on, will ſwallow them up with Deſpair. *Alexander* conquered all that he thought worth conquering of the known World. He came to the End of human Ambition. But did he find Felicity; or was he, in any real Reſpect, happier than when he began his ſtrange Career?—Poor miſerable Wretch! in the Littleneſs of his Mind, he *cried*—cried for more of what had only made him reſtleſs and diſtracted—the Child blubbered for another Plaything; for another World; being fatigued and diſſatisfied with the firſt. God raiſed up this deteſtable Cut-throat for a Scourge to a ſinful Age; and when he had accompliſhed the Chaſtiſe-

Chaſtiſement intended he periſhed like a Shadow.

From repeated Declarations and Examples we know, that *Power*, ſimply and entirely, *belongeth unto God.* Even when Men are employed for his Service, they are mere Inſtruments, which of themſelves can do nothing. Indeed, by human Eloquence and the Subtlety of Thought, it is poſſible, that they may *draw away Diſciples after themſelves*; but not all the Ingenuity and Labor of Mankind, united, could make one real Convert to Chriſt. The *effectual Working* of his almighty Power alone can accompliſh this Taſk; in attempting which, all the bounded Might of Angels would utterly fail. The higheſt Archangel in Heaven could not create a Blade of Graſs, or the Wing of a Fly: What then are his Abilities to regenerate a Soul, and fit a polluted Clod for Life eternal? *Paul* planted, *Apollos* watered, and all the Apoſtles gave up their Lives and their Time for the Promulgation of the Goſpel. They were ſharp Ploughſhares to break up fallow Ground: They ſowed the heavenly Seed with a liberal Hand: They watered, what they had ſowed, with Doctrine, which diſtilled as plen-

plenteouſly as the Dew: They rejoiced in their Labors, and gloried that they were not in vain in the Lord. Yet what ſays the Man, who *labored more abundantly than they all*, who *ceaſed not Night and Day to warn every one with Tears*, and who *counted not his Life dear, that he might finiſh his Miniſtry* with Acceptance; I did not labor, (ſays he); *not I, but the Grace of God, which was with me;* for *neither he that planteth is* ANY THING, *neither he that watereth; but* GOD *that giveth the Increaſe.* He *had nothing* (he ſays further) *whereof to Glory*, except *in his Infirmities:* And to glory in theſe, where would be the Honor or Comfort before the World? The Truth is, he labored *in* the Lord, or the Lord *wrought mightily in him;* ſo that, while GOD put Honor upon his Miniſter, by uſing him as an Inſtrument for the moſt glorious Buſineſs in the World; that very Inſtrument, full of the Grace with which he wrought, gladly avowed, *All my Sufficiency is of God.* When Men are diligent in the Work of the Lord, with the Apoſtle's Frame of Mind, uſually they are crowned with Succeſs. GOD gives them Seed-time and Harveſt, and they have a bleſſed View, ſooner or later,

that

that their Labor hath not been in vain. They know, that the Word, ſpoken by them, can naturally have no more Effect in taking the ſtrong Citadel of a Sinner's Heart, than the Rams-horns by their humble Noiſe could have demoliſhed the Walls of *Jericho* in a Moment: But they ſound the Goſpel-trumpet, both earneſtly and long, and leave the Event with GOD, abhorring the very Thought, that any Thing can be done by their Wiſdom and Strength, confeſſing, that it ſucceeds *not by Might, nor by Power*, but *by the Spirit* of the Lord of Hoſts. They freely own, and ſenſibly feel, with the Apoſtle, that they are *nothing*; that all *the Good, which is done upon Earth, the Lord doeth* himſelf; and that GOD alone *is all in all.*

XXIV. HOW buſily employed is the indefatigable BEE at this flowery Seaſon? He gathers the precious Food from every Bloſſom in his Way, and conveys it, with unremitting Diligence, to his well-conſtructed Cell. There he treaſures it up, and from thence draws forth his rich Subſiſtence, when other Inſects either cannot ſeek, or ſeeking cannot find, a Grain of Food.

LIKE

LIKE this induſtrious Laborer is the Chriſtian indeed. He gathers the precious Food of Grace, from the holy Word, from the Manifeſtations of the Divine Spirit, and from all the Deſignations of Providence to him and about him. He ſeeks for this holy Reliſh in every Thing. Whatever yields it not, is to him inſipid and impure. 'Tis the Food of his Mind, and the Stay of his Soul. In hearing the Word, he carries home all he is able, prays over it, *treaſures it up* (like *Mary*) *in his Heart*, and ſhews the Sweetneſs and Strength of it in his Life. He doth not diſſipate, but gathers—gathers Honey, and not Froth. He doth not hear, that he may ſhine in Diſputes, but that he may learn how to live. He leaves Trifles for the Employment of thoſe, who feel they have nothing to do, or are doing what will come to nothing at laſt. From the paſt Diſcoveries of GOD's Mercy to his Soul, he draws a ſweet Cordial of Encouragement, and lays up in his Mind this invaluable Concluſion; that, JEHOVAH, *having drawn him with his Loving Kindneſs* and Truth, *therefore hath loved him with an everlaſting Love.* And from all the Tokens of Providence, reſpecting the World and its State, the Believer

liever can draw Honey, when carnal Hearts can find none. Like his Maſter, *he has Meat to eat, which they know not of.* In the worſt of Times, he can retire to his ſpiritual Cell, not the Cell of a gloomy Monk, but of an evangelical Heart, and there receive ſome *hidden Manna* to bear him up againſt the worſt of the World, or Death, or Hell. As all Times are in God's Hand; inſtead of venting malicious Invectives upon poor Creatures, who cannot move a Straw againſt the Divine Will, the Chriſtian prays for them and for himſelf; that *they* may do and ſucceed in doing what is right, and that *he* may have Faith and Patience to meet that right Sorrow or right Joy, that beſt Order of Life or of Death, which his heavenly Father hath appointed for him. What can hurt ſuch a Man, with ſuch a Guard? Is the World or the Devil too mighty for God? —He could blow them away in a Moment, as the Duſt of the Balance. One Blaſt of his Peſtilence could deſtroy ten thouſand Armies; one Gale of his Wind bury in the Deep all the naval Strength of the World.—Let this be the Anchor of the Soul, fixed in a Rock, which cannot be moved. O that Chriſtians would more

more zealouſly imitate the little Bee, *and lay up a good Foundation for the Time to come;* there would be *no breaking in, nor going out*, and much leſs *complaining in our Streets.* (Pſalm cxliv. 14.) When the World had no Food of Comfort, and was overwhelmed by the Want of Peace; they would retire to the holy Proviſion of their Father's Love, and praiſe him for that *Peace, which the World cannot give nor take away.* Thus would they *ſuck Honey out of the Rock*, and ſolve what, ſpiritually applied, will ever be a Problem and a Riddle to the carnal Mind; *Out of the Eater came forth Meat, and out of the Strong came forth Sweetneſs.*

XXV. ANOTHER Example of Induſtry is to be found in almoſt every Field and Garden, and meets the Eye of Man, as a living *Memento* to improve his Time, whenever he ſtrays abroad. The unwearied ANT collects her neceſſary Stores with Diligence, and prepares beforehand for the worſt of Seaſons. In this Inſtinct, or whatever we may chuſe to call it, the Traces of the higheſt Wiſdom are to be found. And the wiſeſt of Men has held it up as an inſtructive Pattern to

thoſe,

thoſe, who, with a Bulk ſufficient to cruſh ten thouſand Ants, have not the provident Sagacity of one of them. *Go to the Ant* (ſays he), *thou Sluggard*, ſlow of Eyes to obſerve, and ſlow of Heart to believe, *conſider her ways, and be wiſe, which having no Guide, Overſeer, or Ruler, provideth her Meat* (or Bread) *in the Summer, and gathereth her Food in the Harveſt.*

AND what a Leſſon doth this ANT exhibit to Chriſtians for *redeeming the Time?* Our Days upon Earth are but few; we ſhould therefore work *hard:* And they are *evil;* therefore we ſhould work *well.* How many precious Hours have we conſumed in Ignorance and Sin; how many loſt in Sleep, or in Supineneſs, which is much the ſame! The Days of Man are *threeſcore Years and ten;* and if he doſe away but one Third of his Time, which is the general Caſe, near *four and twenty* of thoſe Years are ſunk in the Image of Death; if one fifth of the Remainder be expended in ſupplying the Stomach with Food and Drink (in doing which, like the Beaſts, we are rather procuring the Means of Life than properly living), above *nine* Years more muſt be deducted for our Subſiſtence as Animals; and if, from the

the Years that remain, are ſubtracted all the idle and uſeleſs Portions of our waking Time; in many Caſes, alas! how little will ſtand upon the Account either for God, for Man, or for ourſelves! How many would be found not *thirty*, not *twenty*, not *ten* Years old, indeed? 'Tis from hence, we find Children at ſeventy, and Brains unorganized and immature under a hoary Crown.—And are the warmeſt Believers exempted from this Reproach? No. The wiſe Virgins, as well as the fooliſh, *all ſlumbered and ſlept.* The moſt wakeful were not awake, and the moſt ſluggiſh did but ſleep. When even the moſt ardent of all Chriſtians ſhall ſum up the Account of their Time; can they do leſs than ſigh over the prodigious Waſte on the one Hand, and the little Improvement on the other?

How few the Moments ſpent for God at moſt!

The Ant has no Guide of her Youth, no Overſeer to conduct her Induſtry, no Ruler for her Welfare; and when ſhe hoards up her little All, ſhe hoards it in a cold and dirty Home. But Believers have had Line upon Line, and Precept upon Precept; they have enjoyed the kindeſt

Pro-

Providences in Family or Friends; and certainly poſſeſs a dear Maſter, who defends them from Evil, and who has provided for them a bleſſed Manſion at laſt—A Manſion, bright with the Effulgence of his Glory, and eternal in the Heavens as his Love. And ſhall this poor puny Inſect, whoſe Stock is a few Atoms, and whoſe End is nothing, reprove *me* for Want of Induſtry; when I am told too, that *my Labor ſhall not be in vain in the Lord?* Forbid it, O my GOD, by a double Portion of thy Grace: Forbid it, for thine own Glory! I have lived long enough like a Brute or a Sinner; let that loſt Time ſuffice! From henceforth I burn to live like an Angel, or at leaſt more and more like one of thoſe, whoſe Citizenſhip is in Heaven, and whoſe brighteſt Hopes are there. Do Thou, who workeſt all in all, *work in me to will and to do of thy good Pleaſure!*

XXVI. THE Mode of GOD's Working is inexplicable. No Man can explain or conceive *how* he puts Life and Spirit into all Things, nor *how* one and the ſame Cauſe ſhould produce ſuch various Effects, as we ſee in the elementary World about us. Our ſenſes convince us of the *Fact*; becauſe

becauſe the Increaſe or Diverſity of Matter is the Object of our Senſes. But the *Manner* of this Fact being entirely the Operation of an immaterial Spirit, we are obliged to ſubmit our Reaſon to a Truth, which no human Reaſon can poſſibly explain. We think it Wiſdom, and it certainly is Wiſdom, to acknowledge an omnipotent Power and an inſcrutable Artifice, working through all Nature, and demanding our implicit Aſſent to what we do not and cannot comprehend.

If, in the ſenſible World, this Rule muſt be embraced by a ſound Underſtanding; with how much ſtronger Reaſon, doth it hold in the World, which is purely ſpiritual? If we are unable to explain the moſt common Properties of Matter and its innumerable Modifications; what Arrogance muſt it be to determine, by ourſelves, upon ſpiritual Eſſences, and upon *their* Modes and Conſtitutions? Nature teaches us to take *that* for granted, in her Operations, which we cannot underſtand or account for: And ſhall the Works of Grace then, of a more exalted Kind, and tending to a more important End, be ſubjected to the Ignorance of the human Mind, and be exploded only becauſe they

cannot

cannot be defined? Can any one Thing in the World, ſtrictly ſpeaking, be fully explained? Can a Blade of Graſs, or a Stone, with the Mode of their Exiſtence? Yet who doubts of their Exiſtence? Shall a preſumptuous Worm then dare to deny the Being of GOD, becauſe he cannot define his Being, which, being infinite, muſt, upon that as well as other Accounts, be neceſſarily indefinable? And would it not be a blaſphemous Audacity in a poor Wretch, who cannot tell how his own Finger moves, nor underſtand one ſingle Property of his own Exiſtence, to pretend a Demonſtration, from his own Reaſon, concerning the Eſſence of his Maker? Is it poſſible, therefore, to know any Thing of the Divine Nature, but by Revelation, or farther than Revelation? And can a Revelation of this Kind be given by any Nature beſide the Divine? A Maggot might much ſooner define and develope the Reaſon of Mankind. Yet, ridiculous as ſuch an Idea might ſeem, it cannot be a ten thouſandth Part ſo irrational, as the Conduct of thoſe Men, who limit the Nature and Operations of the Almighty by their own Conceptions.

In Pride, in REAS'NING *Pride, our Error lies;*
All quit their Sphere, and ruſh into the Skies.

We

We muſt, then, have a ſpiritual Guide, for ſpiritual Things, or ſubmit to walk in the dark. From hence appears the *Neceſſity* of a divine Revelation, which is not to be the *Subject* of our Reaſon, but its *Director*, and particularly in thoſe Things, which relate to GOD and our ſpiritual Intercourſe with him. Such a Revelation alſo muſt be *true*; becauſe it proceeds from Him who is TRUTH eſſential and eternal. Our Reception of it too muſt be upon this Ground alone; becauſe it imparts much Information, which in its own Nature cannot be the Object of Senſe or the reaſoning Faculty. GOD hath thought fit to *declare* the Truth in this World; but he will *demonſtrate* it in another, where our Capacities ſhall be rightly enlarged to conceive it. This implicit Credit given to GOD's Revelation is performed by that new Principle given to the Soul, called Faith, which an Infidel is as much at a Loſs to reaſon upon, as he would be upon a Non-entity; for, indeed, it is a Non-entity to him. Faith believes what GOD has ſaid; not becauſe it can *explain* the Saying, but becauſe, GOD having ſaid it, it therefore muſt be true. As the Eye of a Man convinces him of the

Reality of the Exiſtences about him, though it doth not convey the Mode of their Being: So Faith receives the Truth of the divine Teſtimony, and enjoys it as ſuch, though it can give no ſcientific Demonſtration of its Nature or of the Objects it reveals.

Though this Deduction is here offered, it is confeſſed that all the Reaſonings in the World can never win one Heart to GOD, nor cauſe it to believe aright in his Word. We may, however, ſhould our Labor be to as little Purpoſe as the Apoſtle's with *Agrippa* and *Feſtus*, give a Reaſon of the Hope that is in us; that Gainſayers may at leaſt be ſilenced, when they perceive that Chriſtians, diſcarding Reaſon where it can have no Office, act an abundantly more rational Part than thoſe, who, pretending to exalt her, lift her up to explain heavenly and inviſible Things, while ſhe cannot define the Manner of Operation in any one viſible Object through the material World. This indeed is *inſanire cum ratione*, to be rationally mad, and leads naturally and directly to univerſal Scepticiſm and Infidelity.

SUMMER.

SUMMER.

1. IN this important Seaſon of the Year, the Seeds which were ſown, and the Fruits which were generated in the Spring, are proceeding towards Maturity. To accompliſh this great Purpoſe of God's Works upon Earth, an extraordinary Degree of Light and Heart is poured forth upon all the vegetable Tribes. Without this genial Ordination, no Plant could produce its Seed, no Tree ſupport its Fruit. The Rays of Light act upon the vegetable Oils, and carry on what is uſually called Vegetation. The Oil in Plants lubricates and extends the Veſſels for the Paſſage of the Juices, prevents a too rapid Exſiccation, and, in Proportion to its neceſſary Quantity, maintains their Health and Vigor. It alſo preſerves both them and their Seeds from the Injury of Cold. But for the Oil, every Plant would be aduſt, inert Matter: But for the Light, the Oil could never flow. The

Light, the Heat, the Air, the Oil, and the Vegetable, having free Union and Communication; the Plant is carried on towards its perfect State, and aſſiſts, in its Rank and Place, to brighten the Face of Nature.

WHAT vaſt and invaluable Truths doth this noble Symbol contain?—*Vaſt*, exciting our greateſt Attention; and *invaluable*, delineating in a figure the moſt precious Objects of Salvation. The great Doctrine, which the Summer holds forth to the Mind, is the Chriſtian's *Sanctification* or *Prædiſpoſition* for Glory. We will explain theſe Terms, that we may more preciſely underſtand their Meaning. The ſtrict and primary Senſe of the Word Sanctification is a *Separation from all Sin and Impurity*, an Abſtraction from every Thing vile and worthleſs, a Releaſe from the bitter Bondage of Satan, a Deliverance from the Load of oppreſſing Guilt, and a Devotedneſs to the great Author of all Purity and Perfection. In this view, it only differs from GOD's Election by its *Time* and *Effect*. Election is Sanctification propoſed: Sanctification is Election in Act. The Apoſtle was *ſeparated* from his Mother's Womb, in con-

conſequence of God's Election before he was born; but he did not become a *Saint*, or one *ſeparated in Act*, 'till Chriſt was manifeſted in him. He was choſen out of the World from before all Time; but he was not ſeparated from the World, 'till the Time was completed for that Purpoſe. Both the Hebrew and Greek Words etymologically imply this primary Idea. Hence our Lord ſhewed himſelf as the great ſpiritual *Nazarite*, the *ſeparated* one; and his Redeemed become *Nazarites*, becauſe they are *ſeparated* from the World and from Sin through him and for him. They were eternally united to him in the divine Intention; and they are actually brought into the Enjoyment of that Union by the Power of Grace, towards its eternal Conſummation in Glory.

But we have alſo obtained another Senſe in the Term, and often underſtand by it *infuſed Grace* or Holineſs. Many carry this Senſe ſo far as to mean a *Stock* of inherent Virtue, by which they ſuppoſe themſelves able to exert Acts of Righteouſneſs, and to do a great deal for God without his immediate Aid. We will diſmiſs this as a groſs Error, founded in the Ignorance of God and of human Nature, and attend

only to the better Notion of the Term. Undoubtedly, there is a Communication from God to the Soul, which forms a moſt eſſential Part of its Comfort and Safety; but this can only be called Sanctification, as an Effect may be named from its precedent Cauſe. In *conſequence* of his Sanctification, the Believer in *Jeſus* hath a ſweet Communion with him, by receiving out of his Fullneſs, and *taſting that he is gracious* indeed. The Believer enjoys Chriſt, becauſe he is ſeparated from the unholy World, and in a Life of Union devoted to him: And Chriſt, for the ſame Reaſon, *manifeſts* himſelf to the Believer. This gracious Manifeſtation is in the Old Teſtament called LIGHT: And the antient Church often underſtood by it, what we now underſtand by communicated or imparted Grace. This Grace is the Wiſdom of GOD working in us, and diſcovering itſelf to us. It is therefore an imparted, but not an implanted Bleſſing. It remains in GOD's Hand, and not in ours. The old Believers, accordingly, did not conceive by this Light a Quality ſeparate from its Eſſence, which was Chriſt to them as well as to us, or any Principle inherent in themſelves; but an Effuſion pro-

proceeding from him, and enjoyed with him. *Jehovah* the Redeemer is *the* Light eſſentially; and *the Light of his Countenance*, which enlightens the World above, the new *Jeruſalem*, is the Portion of his People derivatively. The laſt was an Emanation of the firſt; as the Rays of the Sun proceed from its Body, and are in Contact with all Objects in their Direction. But theſe Rays are ſtill *in* and from the Sun, not *in* the Objects. So this Light of Life is not reſident in Man, but communicated immediately from GOD. Agreeable to this is the Apoſtle's Declaration; *I live, yet not I, but Chriſt liveth in me.* And thus, when the antient Believers ſaid, *the Lord hath ſhewed us Light*, or *ſent out his Light* unto us, or *enlightened us with the Light of the Living*; they meant (according to the Language of the New Teſtament) that Chriſt was *the Life and the Light of Men*, yielding that gracious Effuſion, by which the Soul is made alive and kept alive to GOD. This Effuſion might, with Propriety and for avoiding the Confuſion of Terms, be called *Sanctity*, rather than *Sanctification*. Where this Light is, there is a clear Diſcovery of Holineſs and Truth, and alſo

Joy and Peace in the Holy Ghoſt, which are the happy Conſequences of the primary Sanctification before mentioned, and the utmoſt Effects of it in this Life.

With reſpect to the *Prædiſpoſition* for Glory, it ſeems to be that Arrangement, Diſpoſition, or Frame of the Soul, which is cauſed by the active Light, or Grace, or Working of GOD, upon the ſpiritual Faculty of the Believer, which is given by the Holy Spirit through Chriſt, and is formed by Communion with him. This ſpiritual Faculty, when implanted, is recipient of the *Light* of GOD, imparted; as the OIL in Vegetables is recipient of the Light of the Sun. Hence we find this Oil uſed ſymbolically in the Old Teſtament, as the ſpecial Qualification or Prædiſpoſition of any Perſon or Thing to the moſt holy Appointments; and, without it, nothing was acceptable or approved. Hence alſo, the bleſſed Perſon, who finiſhed Salvation, is called the *Meſſiah*, or *Chriſt*, or *Anointed*; becauſe his human Nature, as the Head of his People, was anointed with the holy Oil, or the Divine Spirit, that it might flow to them from himſelf, and be in them by virtue of their Union with him. And from hence too,

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as Believers are called *Nazarites* and *Saints*, becauſe of their *Separation* from the World, ſo they are named *Chriſtians*, becauſe they have an *Unction* of this Oil from the Holy One, and by it are made holy and diſpoſed for Life eternal.

Here we may behold one of the brighteſt Myſteries of the Chriſtian Faith. Chriſt is the *Light*, as God, acting upon the holy Oil in his People for their ſpiritual Growth and Improvement; and Chriſt is the *Life* of his People, as God-man, ſupplying them conſtantly by his Spirit with that holy Oil, by which they have Communion with the Light, or Divine Nature, ſo as to live and grow thereby. Thus, the Redeemed, *being joined to the Lord, are one Spirit:* (1 Cor. vi. 17.) Thus, *he that ſanctifieth, and they who are ſanctified, are all of one:* (Heb. xi. 11.) And thus, in yet ſtronger Terms, *they all are one, as the Father is in Chriſt, and Chriſt is in the Father, and one in the Father and the Son; for the Glory, given to the Son by the Father, is given to them by the Son, who is in them, as the Father is in him.* (John xvii. 21, &c.) If Chriſt himſelf had not revealed this glorious Truth, what Man upon Earth could have con-

ceived, or, conceiving, could have dared to expreſs it?

Upon the whole, it may be obſerved, that there are *three* Diſtinctions to be made in the Word GRACE, which have an immediate and inſeparable Relation to each other; which Diſtinctions, if obſerved, may poſſibly releaſe the Mind from much Embarraſſment, which the Confuſion or Miſapplication of the Term has ſometimes occaſioned to ſerious People. In its *firſt* and leading Senſe, *Grace* means the *free* and *fixed Favor* or *Affection*, which GOD has ſet upon his People; and, of courſe, this is an independent and voluntary Motion of the divine Mind for their Salvation. *He hath Mercy, on whom he will have Mercy.* The *ſecond* Diſtinction of *Grace* is the *Manifeſtation* of this Affection in GOD. Now, as *whatever manifeſts is Light*, this Flowing of the divine Love to Sinners is called *the Light of God's Countenance*; i. e. the *Evidence* or *Appearance* of his Favor and Mercy. This is that *Grace imparted*, by which they ſee the Wiſdom and Glory of GOD's Salvation, and their unalienable Intereſt in it; like as, by the material Light, imparted from the Sun, a Man may ſurvey the Nature, Extent, and Worth of

of a temporal Eſtate. This Grace imparted works upon and with the *Grace* which is *implanted:* And this *laſt* is that *Regeneration* by the Holy One, which is given to the Soul, including the Capacity or Faculty of ſpiritual Life, and acting in that Capacity with the Grace imparted, from Moment to Moment, ſo as to produce the Fruits of Love and Joy inwardly, and of all other Righteouſneſs outwardly, for the Glory of God. This is emblematically repreſented by the Agency of the Light upon the Juices in Vegetables, enabling them to exerciſe their ſeveral Functions of Life. All the other Ideas of the Term *Grace* may be traced from one or other of theſe *three*, as ſo many Branches ſpringing from them.

In this Diſtinction of Grace into eſſential, manifeſtative, and poſſeſſive, may alſo be obſerved the reſpective Offices of the ever-bleſſed Trinity, of which, (as it would be too copious a Matter to treat of them particularly in this Place) the following valedictory Words of the Apoſtle may afford an Application: *The Grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and the Love of God, and the Communion of the Holy Ghoſt, be with you all. Amen.*

Having thus, as briefly as poſſible, explained the Terms, we will recur to the Symbol, which led us to conſider them.

It was obſerved, that an extraordinary Degree of Light and Heat was neceſſary in Summer to carry on the Progreſs of Vegetation. So, in the Chriſtian Field, the believing Soul needs daily and continually *the Light of Life* to act upon him, for his Increaſe, Health, and Maturity. The Chriſtian has no Life *eſſentially* in himſelf, but *lives by the Faith of the Son of God.* He could no more flouriſh and abound in good Works, or (which is the ſame) exert the Acts of ſpiritual Life, of himſelf, than a Plant could grow and bear Fruit without the Sun. All Bodies are opake, and have no Light but from the Orb of the Sun; and there is no Principle of Grace, Holineſs, Sanctification, Righteouſneſs, or ſpiritual Energy (call it by which Name you pleaſe, though the Terms are not preciſely uſed by Divines, which has occaſioned Debate and Confuſion) in any Believer in the World, but as he derives it, continually, from the Godhead through the Mediator. His Faith and Hope are not of himſelf, but are Expanſions of the holy Oil in his new Nature, energized

energized and acted upon by thoſe Emanations of celeſtial Light, which deſcend from the Lord of Glory. *In him* (ſays the Apoſtle) *we live, are moved, and have our Being.*

Hence we may ſee (for we cannot immediately quit this momentous Subject) the Force of that Injunction in the ceremonial Law, by which OIL was ſo frequently preſcribed. There was *Oil for the Light*, Oil to be *mingled with the Offerings*, and Oil for the *Anointings*; all which ſerved to denote, that nothing could be acceptable, nothing have the Favor of GOD, nothing be truly ſacred and devoted to him, without that Unction of the Divine Spirit, which, flowing through the great Anointed One, is the *ſpiritual Oil*, gladdening all the People of GOD, and purifying both them and all their Services to him. Thus, the wiſe Virgins had *Oil in their Lamps*, by which they might have an immediate Communication of Light; in other Words, they had the Spirit of Grace in them, and could hold ſpiritual Communion with the heavenly Bridegroom, as truly as Perſons can feaſt with Joy at a temporal Marriage. (Matt. XXV. 10.) *Ye were ſometime Darkneſs*

neſs (ſays St. *Paul* to the *Epheſians*), *but now are ye Light in the Lord*; and this is the Fruit or Effect of the Spirit, who ſupplies the Soul with that heavenly Oil, which capacitates the Soul to ſhine with heavenly Light. For this Reaſon, it ſeems, that the twelve Tribes of *Iſrael*, repreſenting the Elect of GOD, are called *Urim* and *Thummim* [Lights and Perfections] which were precious Stones, with the Names of the Tribes *engraven* (not written) upon them, and placed upon the Breaſt of the High Prieſt, to ſhew how near and dear the Faithful are to their Redeemer, and that their Names ſhall never be blotted out. They are *Lights*, becauſe they are formed to admit the Rays of divine Light, as a precious Stone is for the free Admiſſion of the natural; and they are *Perfections*, becauſe they are perfect and complete in Chriſt, as the precious Stones were upon the Breaſt of the High Prieſt. United in one Plate, that grand Aſſemblage of Stones, called *the Fullneſs of Stone*, all ſet in pure Gold, was named, what in our Bibles is rendered, *the Breaſt-plate of Judgement*, but which perhaps more juſtly might have been rendered *the Seat of the*

the Decree, from the midſt of which Reſponſes were given concerning the Welfare of *Iſrael*. Thus, the Redeemed are one compact Frame of Jewels, without Defect or Redundancy, conjoined with perfect Purity, borne by the Redeemer on his Boſom, and the Seat or Reſt of the divine Decrees; for in them all the Determinations of Grace and Providence are ultimately fixed and concentered; and, according to their Welfare, is every Anſwer to Prayer given. Chriſt, their true High-prieſt, bore their Names on his *Shoulders* to ſupport them by his Strength, and on his *Breaſt* to endear them by his Love. [Exod. xxviii. 12. 29.] Herein is the Promiſe, made to *Levi* of old, fulfilled to the ſpiritual *Levi*, devoted to GOD, *thy Thummim and thy Urim are of the Perſon, having Mercy upon thee— The Lord bleſſeth his Subſtance, and the Work of his Hands.* [Deut. xxxiii. 8: 11.] All his Perfections, and Progreſs towards Perfection; all his Lights, by which he knows GOD and is known of him, are from that merciful GOD-man, who bleſſes him in Body and Soul, and proſpers him in the Way of Salvation.

Let

Let us only add to the Length of theſe Obſervations one Reflection more, which we may gather from the natural Object before us. As the free Union and Communication of the Light and Oil, with the other Properties in Nature, conſtitute the Health, Vigor, and Increaſe of Vegetables; ſo the gracious Communion of GOD's Love in Chriſt, and his Light, or the Senſe and View of it, by Chriſt, ripen and prædiſpoſe the Souls of the Faithful for that State of Perfection and Bliſs, which GOD hath appointed for them, and which, therefore, they ſhall moſt aſſuredly obtain.

II. HOW ſtrongly doth a Garden itſelf illuſtrate and enforce the great Doctrines, of which we have been treating? In its firſt View, as a Piece of Ground ſelected and taken out of the common Field, fenced round, and appropriated to ſpecial Culture and Delight; how beautiful an Exemplification is it of that divine Favor, which choſe GOD's People, his ſpiritual Garden, out of the common Wilderneſs of this World, which walled it round ſo as that nothing can break down the everlaſting Bounds, and which hath

ordained

ordained that the Trees *ſhould bring forth Fruit, and that their Fruit ſhould remain?* In another View, the conſtant Culture of a Garden, in its ſeveral Circumſtances of breaking up the Ground, planting, pruning, watering, adorning, defending from inclement Weather, &c. moſt aptly repreſents the great Work and Office of the Divine Spirit, in diſpoſing and fitting *the Heirs of Salvation* to Life eternal. Thus, they are not only a Garden, but a *watered Garden;* rendered delightfully cool in the moſt ſcorching Heat, and peculiarly fruitful in the moſt parching Clime. The Garden of *Eden* is a Deſcription of human Nature before the Fall: Every Tree *was pleaſant to the Sight,* every Fruit was *good for Food.* The Heart of Man contained nothing, but what was beautiful for his Maker to look on, or happy for himſelf to enjoy. Since the Loſs of that perfect Form, human Nature has been turned into a *Land of Wandering,* where every Soul is reſtleſs in the Purſuit of Good; and into a barren Wilderneſs, where it can find none. The Lord, of his own free Mercy, in this howling Waſte hath planted a ſecond Garden, with better Defences than the former, the Trees

Trees of which are calculated to bear more ſure, rich, and permanent Fruits. His Eye is ever upon it; his Hand continually improves it; and his Heart delights therein with everlaſting Affection. There is a ſtriking Type of this Grace in Deut. xi. 10, &c. The People of God had been called out of *Egypt* (and his *Church* hath its name in both Teſtaments, becauſe it is *called out of* the World) in which they *ſowed their Seed*, and *watered it with their Foot*; i. e. they were called out from among worldly Men, who ſow their own Counſels and Purpoſes, and endeavor to make them proſper by their own Skill and Labor. But the Land to which they were led was a *Land of Hills and Vallies*, not to be fructified by a certain Flow of Water, as was *Egypt* by the River *Nile*; i. e. all temporal or ſecond Cauſes of Succeſs and Proſperity were removed from them. They were not to expect Bleſſings from *Nature*, but from the *God* of Nature. Of this they had a particular Earneſt before they entered upon this Land; for they had every Day (the Sabbath-day excepted) their *daily Bread* rained down upon them from Heaven, during a Courſe of forty Years in their Paſſage through the Wilderneſs.

It

It was alſo a Land, where they *ſhould look from the Rain of Heaven to receive the Waters*, a Land which the LORD had *purpoſed for them as a Leſſon of his Mind and Will*, and a Land *on which the Eyes of God continually reſted from the Beginning to the End of the Year*; i. e. the Providence of GOD ſhould ſupport their Bodies, and his Spirit their Souls, according to the ſettled Counſels of his Covenant; for his Eyes are upon his People *to do them Good*, through Time and throughout Eternity. To the ſame Effect is the Pſalmiſt's Acknowledgment in Pſalm. cvii. 34, &c. The *Iſraelites* were to depend upon GOD for every Thing; and upon their own Wiſdom, Righteouſneſs, and Strength for Nothing: And ſo is the whole Church of GOD, from the Beginning to the End of Time. The Conſequence of which is, that the Lord ſupplies every Thing *in its due Seaſon*, plenteouſly in its proper and appointed Time. The Text further ſays, and repeats it, that the Lord will *give* all Bleſſings to ſupport, comfort, mature, and carry on both ſpiritual and natural Life; and theſe are expreſſed by the Symbols of *Corn*, and *Wine*, and *Oil*. They were not to be earned, but beſtowed; not hardly

hardly procured, but freely given. All the Men in the World cannot draw a Drop of Water from the Clouds: Nor all the Chriſtians in the World a Spark of Grace from above. Both muſt be freely ſent, and gratuitouſly granted, from HIM, who ruleth All in All.——To carry on the ſpiritual Parallel from the above Text, and to purſue it through its natural and hiſtorical Circumſtances, would require a Volume. Here we can only give Hints, and thoſe but faint and imperfect, of that glorious Wiſdom, Grace, Love, and Power, which pierce like irreſiſtible Rays through the Veil of Nature, and beyond it irradiate the Objects of that ſpiritual World, which but for the reciprocal Light of GOD's Word and Works, would be concealed and inviſible to the keeneſt Eye among Men.

III. YONDER beautiful Fir-tree, which urges its Point, like a Spire, towards the Clouds, marks every Year its Aſcent, and ſhews its periodical Gradations almoſt from the very Root. Lately, it labored among the ſurrounding Shrubs, which ſeemed envious of its Riſe, and urging to keep it down; but now it has fairly

fairly left them all beneath, and receives a freer Enjoyment of the Air and Sun.

THUS the Chriſtian, when weak in Faith and newly partaking the ſpiritual Life, finds a thouſand Lets and Hindrances to the free Contemplation and Enjoyment of the Love of GOD. He is as a Grain of Muſtard Seed in the Garden of Grace, *ſmall* in Size, and *humble* in Shew. But having radically an immortal Vigor, he ſtill preſſes upwards, takes ſtronger and ſtronger Root, and gradually ſpreads forth his Branch upon Branch. Like the Plants of his Garden, he receives new and new *Laminæ*, or increaſing Coverings and Subſtance to his Trunk, from Seaſon to Seaſon; according to the Apoſtolic Deſcription of adding Grace to Grace. (2 Pet. i. 5. See alſo Rom. v. 4.) He was firſt weak, then ſtrong in the Lord. An Acorn, when planted in the Ground, ſends forth a *true* Oak, but yet a *ſmall* one. It becomes Timber by *Degrees*. So the Faith of a Chriſtian is at firſt a weak and humble Confidence, feels much Oppreſſion from carnal Reaſon and ſpiritual Foes, and gains Strength only in Proportion as it is nurtured from above. The weakeſt Faith of the neweſt Convert is indeed invincible,

vincible, becauſe it is defended and ſupported by an Almighty Hand; but it cannot be called the *Plerophory*, or *full Aſſurance*, becauſe it hath not fully received its ſpiritual Tuition, is unacquainted with ſpiritual Exerciſe, and rarely knows what to chuſe or what to avoid in doubtful Propoſitions. (Rom. xiv. 1.) All Faith is truly Reliance; but certainly there is ſome Difference in the Weight and Proportions of that Reliance. Firſt, it believes; then, embraces; and laſtly, (as the higheſt Degree) it cleaves to the Lord, and clings cloſe to his Salvation, of which in that Act it becomes aſſured. But, in the ordinary Courſe of God's Working, it no more becomes the full Aſſurance at firſt, than an Acorn becomes Timber in one Year.—Some Miſtakes ſeem to have been ſtarted upon this important Subject; and therefore it may be worth while to canvaſs it with more Attention; eſpecially as many ſincere Perſons have diſtreſſed themſelves upon the Aſſertions of others, who appear to have conſidered Faith rather as *ſenſible Viſion* and *Revelation*, than a ſpiritual Diſpoſition wrought in the Soul to believe in God, and to confide all its Intereſt and Happineſs to Him. And there are others,

others, who have by Faith meant *Comfort*, which is rather *Senſe* than any thing elſe. 'Tis true, Comfort *follows* Faith, but has no *neceſſary* Connection with it in its Exerciſes; for many have believed moſt faithfully, who, in the Act of Faith, have felt no Comfort at all. Comfort came afterwards, and ever will ſucceed true Faith, ſooner or later. AFTER *ye believed, ye were ſealed*, ſays the Apoſtle.

We muſt look to the original Scriptures, and to the original Language of the Scriptures*, to clear this Point. There we

* The Neceſſity of recurring to the Language of the Old Teſtament for the more perfect Definition of the Terms of the New, will perhaps appear from the following Conſiderations. The moſt important Words, or Expreſſions of ſpiritual Things, in the Goſpels, are Tranſlations of Words ſpoken in Hebrew, or at leaſt in a Hebrew Dialect; and the Words of the other Books of the New Teſtament were alſo Tranſlations, by the Apoſtles, of the Terms uſed in their vernacular Tongue, into Greek, the then prevailing Language. They evidently took ſuch ſingle Words in Greek, as bore the neareſt Relation to the leading Senſe of the Hebrew Terms, which had been uſed in the ancient Church; for the Greek Language, being arbitrary in itſelf, as well as compounded of many others, with no Sort of Regard to the true Religion, and uſed by Men who had no Ideas of the ſpiritual Objects revealed in that Religion, and who conſequently could not

we ſhall find, that GOD (and Chriſt as GOD) propoſes himſelf as THE TRUTH, the

not employ the Terms of it to any ſuch Purpoſe, could not expreſs thoſe divine and heavenly Things, for which it was never prepared. The Apoſtles, therefore, often expreſſed themſelves paraphraſtically in their Greek Writings, that the important Senſe of the original Terms might not wholly be loſt. Thus St. John, in the Revelation, uſes a Periphraſis for the Name JEHOVAH. (Rev. i. 4, &c.) So St. Paul (2 Cor. iv. 17,) uſes another for the Hebrew Word rendered *Glory*, which, with all its Energy, ſcarcely comes up to the original Idea. And there are many other Terms, which contain the moſt conſolatory Doctrines of the Goſpel, transferred from the Old Teſtament to the New after this Manner. Sometimes they coin a Word, and always employ the Terms, which they uſe for ſpiritual Ideas, to a Senſe, in which it was impoſſible for a Heathen, void of thoſe Ideas, to employ them. Hence we ſee the Truth of the Obſervation made by the Son of *Sirach*. "The ſame Things (ſays he) uttered in Hebrew, "and tranſlated into another Tongue, have not the "*ſame Force* in them; and not only theſe Things, "but the Law itſelf, and the Prophecies, and "the reſt of the Books, have *no ſmall Difference*, "when they are ſpoken in *their own* Language." The Reaſon was; theſe treated of ſpiritual Things in a Language *fitted* for them, and ſo properly called *their own*, which the Greek or any other Tongue, compoſed of vague and arbitrary Sounds, certainly was not. We hear a learned Jew complaining of the Greek, with all its boaſted Copiouſneſs and Propriety, that it could not expreſs even his moral Ideas with *Force*. How then could it riſe to ſublimer

the fixed, the ſettled *Foundation*, which nothing can overthrow or confound. Hence all

limer and more heavenly Objects? And yet ſo great is the Excellence of this very Language in other Reſpects, that we find a Latin Poet, and with him an eloquent Latin Philoſopher, confeſſing the comparative Poverty of their own nervous Tongue, and the great Difficulty of conveying the Senſe of the Greek Philoſophy by it. They, therefore, borrow ſome Greek Words, and coin others for their Purpoſe. It has been obſerved from *Jerom*, by M. *Rollin*, that "*Homer*, who is ſo judicious, harmonious, "and ſublime, becomes childiſh, inſipid, and inſup-"portably low, when turned into Latin, Word for "Word." With how much more Difficulty then could this Latin tranſlate, by Word for Word, the Wiſdom of GOD?—This, by the Way, may ſerve to explain the Worth of the *Vulgate* Tranſlation, ſo prized by the Papiſts, as well as fix the Value of the *Septuagint* itſelf in its proper Place. Taking, therefore, this whole Matter together, it ſeems plain, that, in order to underſtand the New Teſtament as well as the Old, in the more difficult Paſſages, where the Terms (if one may be allowed the Expreſſion) are ſpiritually technical; conſtant Reference ſhould be had, from the Greek and other Tranſlations, to the Hebrew *Radices* and *Idiom*. To Hebrews, and in the Hebrew Tongue, have all GOD's Revelations been primarily made; and, therefore, the *Things* of GOD are beſt explained by the *Words* of GOD. This holy Language was peculiarly formed to expreſs or adumbrate thoſe ſpiritual things; and, conſequently, to underſtand them perſpicuouſly, Recourſe ſhould be made to it for Illuſtrations of the New Teſtament, rather than to heathen Writers, who,

all the Promiſes *are in Chriſt, Amen;* that is, fixed upon him as the ſolid Foundation, and therefore worthy to be believed. And Men are ſaid to *believe* (which is a Word derived from the ſame Root) when they *reſt upon* this Foundation. They have then a fundamental Stability. Now, GOD being the Truth itſelf, all his *Words* muſt be true. The Chriſtian is enabled to receive this divine Teſtimony, puts his Seal to the Truth of it, and (as one juſtly expreſſed it) "takes GOD at his

however learned or elegant, could know nothing of its ſpiritual Purport, and who, if they uſed the ſame Terms which are there uſed for divine Things, muſt neceſſarily have uſed thoſe Terms for a very different Meaning. This is not ſaid in Diſparagement of claſſical Learning, but to prove that (like all other Heathens) it has no Right to enter into and prophane the Temple of the Lord. Antient Authors may indeed ſerve to illuſtrate Paſſages, which relate to the Offices and Principles of Men among the Gentiles; but, with Regard to divine Things, there can be no antient Treatiſe ſo fit to explain the Senſe of the Goſpels and Epiſtles, as the moſt antient Book in the World, which was compoſed to ſubſerve the very ſame Purpoſe and Ideas. This is the Way to *compare ſpiritual Things* with *ſpiritual*, and thereby to arrive (by the Bleſſing of the Divine Spirit) at a more full Comprehenſion of *the deep Things of God*, and conſequently to become more and more *wiſe unto Salvation*.

and

"Word." Thus the *Object* of Faith is *certain*, ſo as to remove all juſt Occaſion of Doubt. The *Nature* of Faith itſelf, in its own *Eſſence*, is alſo *Certainty*; but the *Act* and *Exerciſe* of this Faith, or its *Exiſtence* in the human Heart, being clogged with manifold Corruptions; the Chriſtian can neither fully believe as he ought, nor perfectly do as he would. Looking, however, at Faith in its ſimple Idea, we may define it to be that gracious Perception of the renewed Mind which diſcovers the Truth of GOD, accompanied by an ardent Affection of the renewed Heart which embraces it; and both wrought in the Believer by the Holy Spirit, and ſuſtained, increaſed, and completed, by his Agency alone. Thus he reſts and is built upon the Foundation —the whole Trinity as the grand Baſis, Chriſt as the chief Corner-Stone, and next upon the Apoſtles and Prophets, as founded upon him. *Other Foundation than this can no Man lay*; and, *without it*, all the Viſions and Revelations in the World are not worth a Reflection. *Luther* had a full Conception of the Excellence of Faith and the true Strength of its Foundation, when he expreſſed him-

ſelf in theſe Words: "As I do not eſteem "myſelf qualified either to have or to "interpret particular Revelations; ſo I "do not deſire for myſelf that ſort of "Faculty or Knowledge, and have begged "of GOD, that he would not ſend either "Viſions, or Dreams, or Angels, to me. "I am content with this Gift, that I have "the Holy Word, which abundantly "teaches, and ſupplies, whatever is ne-"ceſſary both for this Life and for Life "eternal. In this I believe, and here I "reſt, with a certain Impoſſibility of not "being deceived. Nor do I derogate "by this from the Gifts of others, if poſ-"ſibly, beſide the Scripture, GOD may "have revealed any Thing by Dreams, or "Viſions, or Angels. They may indeed "be Gifts; but they are ſuch, as I neither "care for, nor deſire. For I tremble at "that infinite Multitude of Deluſions, "Artifices, and Impoſtures, by which "Satan hath deceived the World for ſo "many Ages under the Papacy: So that "if I cannot credit the Sufficiency of the "holy Scripture, I certainly ſhall not "eaſily believe, either Angel, or Viſion, "or Dream." And, in another Place, he adds: "I have often ſaid, that, from "the

" the firſt, I have always intreated the
" Lord, that he would never ſend Dreams,
" or Viſions, or Angels, to me. For
" many fanatical Spirits have attacked
" me, of whom one has boaſted of his
" Dreams, another of his Viſions, another
" of his Revelations, by which all of
" them would have drawn me after them.
" But I have always anſwered, that I ne-
" ver deſired Revelations of that Sort,
" and that I had no Dependence upon
" them, when propoſed. My moſt ar-
" dent Wiſh is, that GOD would give me
" the true Senſe and Underſtanding of
" his holy Word: For, if I have the
" Word, I am ſure of walking in the
" right Path, and that I cannot eaſily err
" or be deceived. Indeed, I had rather
" have *David's* Underſtanding, than pro-
" phetical Viſions, which, I believe, *Da-*
" *vid* did not greatly deſire. Let me
" explore the certain Meaning of the
" Scripture. The Fanatics, with their
" Dreams, would have led me, ſome one
" way, ſome another; ſo that if I had
" attended to them, I muſt have changed
" my Doctrine thirty or forty Times.—
" If I have the Word, I am ſure, that
" GOD and his Angels are with me."

(Luth. *Com. in Gen. apud* Wits. *Miſc. Sacr.* Vol. I. p. 379.) If others, who have pretended to wonderful Communications from above, had received the Bleſſing to be thus *faithful*; the Chriſtian World had been ſpared many Effuſions of Abſurdity, the Cauſe of GOD ſaved much unneceſſary Reproach, and many a ſimple Heart preſerved from Uncertainty and Diſtreſs. However, it is melancholy to obſerve, that many of theſe Revelationiſts, with all their boaſted Intercourſe with Heaven, live upon Earth with leſs Order in their Lives, and with more Slavery to human Paſſion, than even ſome decent People, who make no Pretences to Religion at all. It is alſo ſad to reflect, how many of theſe high Pretenders have come to nothing.

But, one would not be underſtood to affirm, that GOD doth never vouchſafe extraordinary Communications and Teſtimonies of himſelf; for theſe have occurred upon ſome extraordinary Occaſions. They were, however, *uncommon* and *extraordinary*, and are not to be looked for, becauſe they are not *promiſed*. And let them come when they may, or how they may, if they are not agreeable to the written

written Word, and to the *Law and Teſtimony* revealed; they are to be exploded as Deluſions, and ſuſpected rather to be Suggeſtions of the Devil, than Impreſſions from God.

We have conſidered *Faith*, in its ſimple Idea, as a gracious *Reliance* upon the Truth of God: And we may define the *full Aſſurance* of Faith to be, not an Excluſion of all Doubting, but a Victory over prevalent Doubting, and a ſettled Confidence in the Wiſdom, Power, Love, and Faithfulneſs of the Lord. Corruption, while we are in the Body, will *rebel*; and ſo will Doubt and Unbelief, which are the great Agents of Corruption: But they do not *conquer*; they do not *reign*. Faith has the final Victory; though Faith muſt fight conſtantly to obtain it. As, in the Caſe of a Rebellion, every Defeat weakens it, and ſtrengthens the Power of a State; ſo, in this Rebellion of our corrupt Nature, with its Army of Unbelief, Doubts, and warring Paſſions, the Soul is invigorated by frequent Victories, and at length obtains ſuch a Meaſure of Strength, as not to be ſhaken in its Conflicts. This Habit, and this Strength, thus wrought in the Mind by Chriſt (for there is no

Victory without the great *Captain of Salvation*), is the *Plerophory* or *full Aſſurance of Faith*, which every Believer ſhould be ſeeking, as the greateſt Privilege and Bliſs on this ſide Heaven. Now all this, evidently, doth not ariſe from Whim or Viſion, but from a ſolid, warranted, well-grounded, and well-fought Experience—an Experience, which doth not reſt upon Opinion, but upon Fact, not on immediate Revelations, which God hath promiſed to nobody, but upon his infallible Word, which is ſpiritually open to all that truly believe.

From this Conſideration, the weakeſt Believer may receive ground of Comfort. If he cannot rely, as much as he would; yet if he rely at all, or as much as he can, he has found a Meaſure of Grace to be faithful: And the very Deſire is not of himſelf, but freely given him from above. He muſt join Faith and Patience; and he ſhall find, in preſſing daily after the Mark of his high Calling, that he ſhall not miſs it at the laſt. Biſhop *Davenant* calls full Aſſurance, not ſo much Faith itſelf, as *the Daughter of Faith*. To which we might add, the Daughter cannot be born ſo ſoon as the Mother, who muſt previouſly have a requiſite Maturity.

Upon

Upon the Whole, we may ſee how juſtly the Image from Nature reſembles the Progreſſion of Grace. Every Believer may look back upon the Times that are paſt, and ſee many Victories obtained, many Snares avoided, many Corruptions ſubdued, which once had ſtrong Dominion within his Soul. He fought hard in ſome Caſes, and ſeemed perhaps to be foiled in others; but he may remember, that he ever roſe from his Falls with increaſing Watchfulneſs and Strength. The Blows of the Adverſary have inſpired him with Warineſs; and he is now leſs and leſs *ignorant of Satan's Devices*. He is grown, like our Fir-tree, above many of the obſtructing Shrubs; and many things, which once were great Difficulties, are now become Exerciſes only to keep (as it were) his Life of Faith in Health and Vigor. He can breathe more freely the Air of Heaven, and is grown higher in his Wiſhes to be there. The Realities of Glory, always inviſible to Nature, become through Grace more and more viſible to his Soul, and wean his Heart therefore more entirely from the World.—This is Growth in Grace: And, without this, all other

Attainments are but a Shadow or a Name.

IV. THE moſt flouriſhing Tree, or Plant, though it might ſpring like *Jonah's* Gourd, is not *ſeen* to grow. Time is requiſite to mark or to meaſure the Progreſs; and, meaſuring the Progreſs by the Time, we determine the Growth to be more or leſs vigorous, and conſequently the Plant to be more or leſs healthful.

TRUE Believers alſo are not like Muſhrooms,

Which ſpring with Morning, and at Night decay;

But *Trees of the Lord's Planting, that he may be glorified.* They grow, but their Growth is not ſeen by themſelves or by others, *immediately.* It is perceived only in the courſe of Time. Nor do they grow by Noiſe, any more than the vegetable Kingdom. An increaſing Volubility of Tongue, and a bluſtering Profeſſion, like a roaring Wind among Trees, are more likely to blow down than to impart Life. (James i. 26.)

It

It is not ſo much the Intereſt of a Chriſtian to talk about the Goſpel, as to have his Heart moulded into the very Frame and Faſhion of it. Let his Spirit be truly evangelized, and his Converſation will then be *as becometh the Goſpel*, as well as *of* the Goſpel. Grace is weighty, and leads to a Weight of Glory. It turns from Lightneſs and Trifling, as its Bane. (Eph. v. 4.) It dwells in a recollected Mind, a ſteady Heart, and a peaceful Soul. When the Profeſſor has this within him, he ceaſes to be a Rattle; knowing, that thoſe are but the emptieſt Veſſels, which give the loudeſt Sound.

V. SOME Trees in the Garden make a great Shew, but bear no Fruit. They are ſplendid in Leaves, and perhaps in Bloſſoms; but they yield either nothing fit to eat, or ſomething not worth eating. The largeſt Species of Tree known in the World is the *Baobab* or *Calibaſh* Tree of *Senegal*, which often exceeds ſeventy Feet in the Circumference of the Trunk, and covers with its Boughs a Circle of above one hundred and thirty Feet in Diameter; but yields a Fruit, which, while it is unfit for Food, does not exceed the Size of a

common Kidney-bean. With this enormous Subſtance; it has large and handſome Leaves, and looks, at a Diſtance, rather like a Grove than a ſingle Tree.

O WHAT a Picture is here of many a ſpecious Soul! How many have looked tall like Cedars in *Lebanon*; how many have promiſed fair like the Fig-tree in the Goſpel; who, when the Maſter ſought for Fruit, have yielded none? Some have ſpoken glorioufly, and written elegantly, of the Word of GOD and heavenly Things; have been ſuppoſed in the uppermoſt Claſs of the Chriſtian School; and have even *done*, in GOD's Name, *many wonderful Works*; who, after all, have——

——O my Soul, leave the aweful Blank, and turn inwards for a deep Examination and Proof of thine own Faith and Experience; leſt, after treating of Chriſt and his holy Truths, thou thyſelf be only *a Caſt-away!* Diſmal Reflection! It is ſad for thoſe, who are deplorably ignorant of the goſpel, or who never heard its *joyful Sound*, to fall into Perdition; but how much more dreadful muſt the Deſtruction of other Perſons be, who have talked loud and written fair

fair of their Knowledge in the Things of God, and yet have been actuated all the while by the ſelfiſh, proud, and unſanctified Motives of the Devil? Rather let me be an humble Shrub of a Span in Height, with lowly Branches bent by the Fruits of Grace, than all the *Calibaſhes* in the World, with their ſpreading Boughs and uſeleſs Trunks. O that I may be *a green Olive-tree in the Houſe of my God*, of whom *my Fruit may be found*, and to whom it may be acceptable, through Chriſt Jeſus!

VI. IT is a vulgar Error, that Plants feed upon the Soil itſelf, and derive their Increaſe from it. The Truth is, that the Soil itſelf is a Receiver of the vegetable Paſture from the Skies, and becomes a Repoſitory or Reſervoir of what it has received for the Support of the Trees or Herbs which may grow upon it, but imparts none of its own Subſtance to form their Subſtance, which is compounded of other and different Elements. In proof of this, an Orange Tree has been known to be planted in a Box, in which the Quantity of Earth was both meaſured and weighed, and to have grown for many Years

Years to a conſiderable Size; but when the Earth (to which no Additions were made at any Time) was taken out, there was preciſely the ſame Quantity and Weight as at the firſt. Again; every body knows, that only the upper Stratum or Surface of the Earth, which has been either expoſed to the Elements or mixed with things which have been expoſed, is capable of ſupporting Plants. And Soils are good or bad, as they are more or leſs recipient and retentive of the celeſtial Fluids. Sandy Soils, for inſtance, receive eaſily; but, being compounded of little more than an Aſſemblage of very ſmall Stones (as may be diſcerned immediately by a Microſcope) they as eaſily paſs through them what they have received: and Clay, being of too adheſive a Nature to receive, or to part with what it has received, unleſs extremely broken and meliorated by ſome favorable Seaſons, of courſe becomes ſterile to Plants, and rarely fit for much Vegetation.

A STRIKING and beautiful Leſſon this of human Dependence upon GOD! In Grace, as well as in Providence, every Bleſſing comes from above. The Earth and the Creatures have nothing in themſelves

ſelves but by his Operation. The Soul of Man, likewiſe, derives all its Holineſs from above; and therefore the Fruits of Righteouſneſs in him are called *the Fruits of the* SPIRIT. Without his immediate Agency, the Nature of Man, with reſpect to ſpiritual Productions, is as barren as a Rock. And, after Converſion, *all the freſh Springs* of the Believer are in his GOD; and, without GOD, *he can do nothing*. Grace is not in Man's Power, but, from Moment to Moment and from Day to Day, is dealt down from Heaven, as the Manna in the Wilderneſs was, or as the Rains and Influences are, from the Skies. "Give us this Day our daily Bread," is a Prayer made to expreſs every Day's Dependence, as it comes. The Bread of Life is the *Gift* of GOD, and not the *Stock* of Man: It comes through the divine Will and Power, not through human Potency, and repleniſhes thoſe for whom it is ordained. It is *the Children's Bread*, and not the World's. The World neither knows nor deſires it.

All *Increaſe* of Grace, as well as Grace in the Beginning, is from GOD in Chriſt. As the Subſtance of the Earth is not gathered into Plants for their Growth; ſo nothing

nothing carnal or earthly adminiſters the true Life or Subſtance to the Children of God. This comes intirely from himſelf, who is *wonderful in working.*

The *Retention,* as well as Reception, of Grace, is alſo *through the good Hand of God* upon the Soul. He prepareth the Heart, and maketh the Ground of it as good as it may be, according to his Pleaſure. Some Souls, like the beſt Soils, are rich in the Abundance of the heavenly Influences which they are enabled to retain; and conſequently the Plants, which God eſtabliſhes therein, become *Plants of Renown,* yielding ſixty or an hundred fold. Others, like the ſandy Glebe, receive eaſily the Word, but too eaſily part with it again; ſo that the Crop, which might have been expected, becomes thin and poor; or, in dry and trying Seaſons, ſcarce any at all. Others, again, poſſeſſing a ſtiff and ſtubborn Temper, may be compared to Clay, which requires much Labor and Breaking for Cultivation and for Reception of celeſtial Influence, and which, after all, produces Fruits neither ſo ſweet nor ſo abundant, as the more porous and friable Mould.

VII. IN

VII. IN almoſt every Pond exiſts an Object, which, obſerved with Attention in all its Parts, opens a new Source of Wonder and Curioſity to an inquiſitive Mind. It is the *vegetable Animal* called a *Polype*. There are ſeveral kinds of this amphigeneous Being found both in ſalt and freſh Water. They take Root as Plants, but exert Acts of Life, as Creatures of animal Senſation. They evidently vegetate, and as evidently are animated. They have a double Life, and yet form but one Species of Being.

THESE animal Plants or Flowers beautifully exemplify the two-fold Life of a Chriſtian. He riſes indeed upon the Symbol; for he is a Partaker of a *divine*, as well as a *human* Nature. He lives as an Animal in the groſs Atmoſphere of this World; but, as a renewed immortal Spirit, he exerts the Acts of a purely ſpiritual Life, which are as diſtinct from all animal Senſibilities, as the animal Faculty of the Polype is from the vegetable. We cannot define the *Mode* of either Exiſtence; but we can eaſily diſcern *the* Exiſtence and *the* Diſtinction. We can alſo ſpeak poſitively upon one Fact, that the Chriſtian receives his ſpiritual Life, and the momentary

momentary Support of it, from the Divine Spirit; becauſe the Word of GOD (as well as Experience) will bear us out in the Aſſertion. Every real Believer perceives a Life in his Soul, with which he was not born, which was at ſome Period given him by the Miniſtration of the Word and Spirit, and which puts forth in him many Acts of a divine Nature, to which his human Senſe was, before that Miniſtration, a perfect Stranger. He has new Eyes, new Ears, new Heart, new Hopes, new Affections: In a Word, he is become, in the Language of the Scripture, *a new Creature.* (2 Cor. v. 17.) This *new Creation,* which every carnal Mind, ſwoln with the Opinion of its own Powers, is diſpoſed to treat with Enmity, becauſe it cannot comprehend what is above itſelf, is a *ſpiritual* Creation, formed in the Soul of the true Chriſtian, and ſuperadded to that Nature with which he came into the World. Hence he appears outwardly as a mere Man; but to GOD, to Spirits, and to himſelf, both an immortal and a celeſtial Being. Men ſee his groſs Parts; but only ſpiritual Exiſtences can diſcern his ſpiritual. He is known

to

to be a *Citizen of Heaven*, by all the Inhabitants of Heaven.

This Symbol yields likewiſe an Argument, by Analogy, for the Immortality of the Soul. The Scale of Being aſcends by Gradation. As vegetable mounts to animal Life in the Polype; ſo Man from corporeal riſes to incorporeal, connecting the World of Matter with the World of Spirit and Immateriality.

——————— *Grant a Make*
Half-mortal, half-immortal; earthy, Part;
And Part, etherial; grant the Soul of Man
Eternal; or, in Man the Series ends.
Wide yawns the Gap; Connection is no more.

VIII. EVERY Pond of water, as well as the whole Maſs of Air, ſwarms with Inhabitants; and I have been ſometimes much amuſed on the Bank of a Piece of Water in my Garden, by the wonderful Tranſmutation of various Inſects from the State of Maggots, in which they firſt lived and ſwam as Fiſhes, to the State of Flies into which they have almoſt inſtantaneouſly emerged and flown as Creatures of the Air. In one Minute, they have been

been ſlow Animals ſwimming in a denſe and groſs Element; and in another, they have ſprung into a Being, almoſt totally different in Life and Form, and flown ſwiftly off through an Element comparatively rarefied and pure, leaving their former Coverings or Sloughs in the Water behind them.

A MOST ſignificant Emblem of that great Change, which ſhall paſs upon human Nature in the Hour of Death! The Saint, in particular, ſhall ſtart from a heavy earthly Tabernacle into a Form of Brightneſs and ſpiritual Agility. The Maſs of Clay, with which he is now enveloped, both hides and confines his ſpiritual Part to the groſs Atmoſphere of this World; but it ſoon ſhall be thrown off, and, like the Exuviæ or Coverings of the Inſects abovementioned, ſhall be left to rot in the maſs from whence it was derived. O what an everlaſting Change in a Moment of Time! From corruptible to incorruptible! From mortal to immortal! From Pain to Bliſs! From Darkneſs to Light! From dull Senſation to quick and vivid Intellection! From dying Creatures to the everliving God!

IX. IN this warm Seaſon, while every Plant flouriſhes towards Maturity,

a

a great Variety of pernicious Inſects is diſperſed over all the vegetable Kingdom. Some are large and voracious, like the Locuſt and Caterpillar, which deſolate all before them. Others ſpread a no leſs certain, but more ſecret, Ruin over the Trees, the Fruits, or the Leaves, which they attack. Some work Deſtruction in the Dark, and make their Ravages when no Eye can ſee them, as the Slug and the Corn-fly. And others again, ſuch as the Blights or Vine-fretters, almoſt imperceptibly aſſail the tender Twigs, and, though in themſelve minute and weak as Individuals, are formidable from the vaſt Armies into which they combine. Every Plant, which grows, is ſubject to Ravage: One Party attacks its Leaves, another its Fruit, and a third its Trunk; while the Worms, Moles, &c. like Miners at a Siege, aim their Efforts at the Foundation, and ſap the very Roots,

How ſtrikingly expreſſive are theſe peſtilent Vermin of thoſe MANY *fooliſh and hurtful Luſts, which war againſt the Soul!* How characteriſtic of thoſe numberleſs Swarms of evil Spirits, which lie in wait to devour! And, as in Summer, the deſtructive Inſects principally abound; ſo, in the Proſperity of Man, do theſe Enemies

Enemies of his Peace chiefly beſet him. They creep under his choiceſt Bleſſings, as Vermin will under the faireſt Leaves: And as the moſt delicious Fruits are moſt liable to Depredations, ſo the greateſt Mercies ſhould be received with the greateſt Watchfulneſs and Prayer, leſt ſome lurking Foe ſhould inſinuate himſelf among them. There are ſome Inſects, which bear the exact Colour of the Leaves they deſtroy, and are therefore the more difficult to be ſeen: And how often will Satan be transformed into an apparent Angel of Light, that he may work unperceived, and the more readily carry on his deſtructive Aims? In the neareſt Approaches to the Throne of Grace, that Summer of the Soul; how will this lurking Enemy attempt to defile, what he is not permitted to deſtroy? How will he ſuggeſt Motives of Exaltation from the deepeſt Abaſement of Spirit, and urge Notions of Self-righteouſneſs from the very Confeſſions of our Sin? And if he can thus prevail, as ſometimes he doth; how much more will he aim to ſwell the Heart with the Vaſtneſs of its Importance, and the high Degree of its Attainments, when it has been favoured with

with the Senſe of GOD's Goodneſs and Love? O Chriſtian, when the Light of thy Father's Countenance ſhineth *upon* thee; pray earneſtly, that the Light may ſhine *into* and *under* thee, that thou mayeſt not only be fully diſcovered to thyſelf, but that alſo thou mayeſt be able to diſcover the ſecret and ſubtle Enemy of thy Peace. He, if let alone, would poiſon every act of Duty and Love, either by mixing with it thy ſinful Paſſions or his own diabolical Inſinuations. Whether theſe Inſects crawl or fly; that is, whether Luſt and the Devil appear like a Maggot feeding upon the Traſh of the Earth, or like a Moth with Wings of Pride and Self-exaltation; in the Help of thy Saviour, ſhake them from thee; for the Purpoſe of both is to deſtroy thy Soul, or to wither its growing Strength. Look to the great Huſbandman, who will either ſend his Providence to take them off, or with the Word of his Power, like Lightning from Heaven, blaſt the blighting Race upon thee. Be they ever ſo numerous, they ſhall be like *Sennacherib's* Hoſt before the deſtroying Angel, (2 Kings xix. 35.) *all dead Corpſes* in the Space of a Night: And, if others ſucceed them,

fight

fight the good Fight of Faith, and pray on; for, finally, thou ſhalt be *a Conqueror, and more than a Conqueror, through* HIM, *that hath loved thee.* The Time will ſhortly come, when the many Foes, which thou haſt ſeen in the Days of thy Fleſh, *thou ſhalt ſee again no more for ever.* (Exod. xiv. 13.)

X. THE Fœcundity of noxious Inſects is prodigious. It has been calculated, that one Female of the *Corn-fly* alone can produce, in one Year, no fewer than one hundred and five Millions, forty three thouſand, ſeven hundred and fifty Individuals of the ſame Species.

WHAT an Emblem this of the prolific Nature of Sin! Indulge one Corruption; and how will you ſhut out the Torrent? One Lie, to cover itſelf, will often produce twenty; and every Luſt, though ſupplied by Sins without Number, will ſtill cry out, like the Horſe-leech, *Give, give!* When a Man allows himſelf in any Sin, he cannot ſay, *Thus far ſhalt thou go, and no farther*; for he commits himſelf to the Back of a wild Courſer, which (if GOD do not prevent) will entirely run away with

with him. Sin never ſtops but at one Goal; and that is, in the Boſom of Hell.

We may alſo look at the generative Faculty of all Sin in the one firſt Sin of *Adam*. What a Race of Wickedneſſes, Impieties, and Vices, has originated from that ſingle Stock? Can all the Sands of the Sea, or all the Stars of the Sky, be equivalent in Number! Or can Number expreſs all the Sins of Thoughts which never appeared, of Words which have been uttered, or of Deeds committed, for almoſt ſix thouſand Years?—Sinner, canſt thou reckon thoſe, which thou haſt conceived in thy ſhort Life? No. They are like the Caterpillars, which GOD ſent upon *Egypt*, abſolutely *without Number*. (Pſalm cv. 34.)

XI. IN the Summer Seaſon, the very luxuriant Branches of Fruit-trees are pruned off. Theſe, if permitted to remain, would draw away all the Sap from the tender Shoots, which alone bear the Fruit, and, by deſtroying them, would injure and make barren the Tree.

NOT the moſt *ſplendid* Profeſſors bear the moſt real Fruit, but the moſt *humble*. There have been many Souls, rich in Faith, who have eſcaped the World's Eye, and

the Eye of Believers too, but have been moſt precious in the Sight of GOD. Perhaps, ſome of theſe *ſecret ones*, whom even ſerious Perſons have thought the *leaſt* and the *laſt*, will be found among the *firſt* and the *greateſt* at Chriſt's appearing. Gold and Diamonds rarely lay upon the Surface. Who could have ſuppoſed, that a poor Heathen, and a heathen Soldier too, of a Profeſſion the moſt unfavorable to Piety, ſhould have outſhone all the Profeſſors in the viſible Church, and even the Apoſtles themſelves, in an Exerciſe of Grace; if Chriſt himſelf had not declared it? *Verily*, ſays our Lord of the Centurion, *I have not found ſo great Faith, no not in Iſrael.* (Matth. viii. 10.) *The* LORD *ſeeth not as Man ſeeth* (it was ſaid upon another remarkable Occaſion); *for Man looketh upon the outward Appearance, but the* LORD *looketh on the Heart.* (1 Chron. xvi. 7.)

As in the Church, ſo in every individual Member of it, not the moſt florid is always the moſt true; but the humble Acts and inward Breathings of the Soul have moſt of Chriſt in them, and are the moſt efficient Excitements to Works really good. *The Fruits of Righteouſneſs are by Chriſt*

Chriſt Jeſus, to the Glory and Praiſe of God: And, with theſe, all GOD's Trees are more or leſs *filled.* (Phil. i. 11.) Our ſpiritual Huſbandman pruneth his Fruit-bearing Branches, that they may produce more Fruit. He cuts off their ſtubborn Will, rank Pride, and high Imaginations; all of them very ſhewy and very luxuriant Boughs: But he cuts them off for a bleſſed End—that Faith may be ſtrengthened, and that Joy, Peace, Holineſs, and all other Fruits of Grace may abound. The true Believer can be ſatisfied, and often rejoices to ſee the tender Love of GOD, in the Suppreſſion of his carnal Will and the *old Man*, and in the Eſtabliſhment of the Will of *Jeſus*, who is the Life of the *new Man*. The unmortified Spirit alone is diſſatisfied and unhappy at this Work; but a Soul, given up to GOD and reſigned to him, enjoys this Crucifixion of Self and this Croſs, which he muſt daily take up after his Saviour. For he is endued with this faithful Perſuaſion, that let things *appear* as they may, his beſt Intereſt is ſafe, and his Soul is ſafe; becauſe GOD hath promiſed, that ALL THINGS *ſhall work together for his Good.* This is a *hard Saying* to Fleſh and Blood; but, if GOD himſelf be infallible,

it is a *true* one; and, ſooner or later, every Believer will find it ſo.

XII. FREQUENTLY, in Summer, we have great Droughts and parching Heats, which would deſtroy many tender Plants, were it not for the copious Dews, which commonly fall at this Seaſon, and for the attentive Watering of the Huſbandman.

THUS GOD is gracious to his People, in the worſt of Times. He either preſerves them by his Providence, or removes them from the Evil. He is to them, as the *Shadow of a great Rock* from the virulent Heat of Trial; or as the *Dew of Iſrael* to their Spirits, to enable them to undergo it. In thoſe parching Seaſons, when the Comforts of all other Men are burnt up and deſtroyed; his Benign Spirit, ever ready to hear the Cry of his needy Ones, waters their Souls from the River of Life, nor ſuffers them to droop or decay. So aſſiduous is his Care, ſo unremitted are the Tokens of his Love, that he *waters them every Moment*. Whatever they may *ſeem* to want, either to themſelves or others, they really *want nothing that is good* for them. They *have all and abound*; not perhaps in the immediate Perception of

of the animal Senſe, but in the real and certain Enjoyment of that poſitive Mercy, which they truly need. Such is his Wiſdom towards them, that he often converts the *Want* of what they think a Bleſſing, into *the very Bleſſing* which they really want. Thus even *his Clouds*, gloomy and obſcure as they ſeem, *drop Fatneſs*. When they come to Glory, doubtleſs they will look back upon Time, and reckon the Loſſes, Diſappointments, Troubles, and Sorrows, they felt in the Fleſh, among the choiceſt Mercies, which God ever beſtowed. They will then ſee the Apoſtle's *need-be* for all *the Heavineſs* they endured *through manifold Temptations*, and will bleſs the Goodneſs of God for the ſoreſt Troubles, which they ever ſuſtained in the World. For,

XIII. AS the greateſt Summer's Heat the ſooneſt perfects the Fruit, and gives it the richeſt Flavor;

So the greateſt Miſeries and Trials, which the true Chriſtian can endure in this Life, ripen his Soul the faſteſt for Glory, and cauſe the Graces of the Spirit to flow but the richer and ſtronger within him. As God *doth not afflict* his People *willingly*, or without particular Reaſon and Neceſ-

ſity; ſo they have not one Sorrow too much, too many, or too long.—Here let Faith and Patience come in. Here is their Exerciſe; here their Warfare. This is not *the Strife of Words;* for here the Sound of the Hypocrite, and the Noiſe of the carnal Profeſſor, are not heard; but a mighty Wreſtling of the Soul with God, which the Lord approves, becauſe the Soul in this Act gives up its own Will and Strength, and *cleaves to him* alone *with full Purpoſe of Heart.* Grace enables the believing Mind to reſign all into God's Hands, and to be active or patient, to be in this State or another, juſt as it ſeemeth him good. O happy Frame of Soul! O deſirable Temper of Mind! This is to be *rich in Faith,* wiſe in Experience, tranquil upon Earth, and foretaſting Heaven. Compared with this; what are the Buſtles and Bubbles of the World, the Pomp of Man, the Parade of Profeſſion, and all the fair Shews in the Fleſh? They are Vanity and a Dream—lighter than the Vapor of Vanity, and leſs than nothing!

AUTUMN.

I. NOW comes the Crowning of the Year. All the Care and Labor of the Huſbandman, in the *preceding* Seaſons, from *this* expect their Recompence. The Profuſion of Fruits upon the Trees, the ripened Corn in the Fields, and the chearful Acclamations of ten Thouſand Swains, unite to proclaim *the Joy of Harveſt*, and to diffuſe Delight through every rural Scene. The Gladneſs of triumphant Induſtry appears on all the Plains. The Birds, with their chirping Offſpring, regale on the Bounty of Providence, which at this Seaſon, when their feathered Tribes increaſe the Demand, hath, with equal Wiſdom and Goodneſs, increaſed the Supply. All animated Nature wears the Face of Joy. Nor is inanimate Nature ſilent of Praiſe. *The Valleys are ſo covered over with Corn*, that they too *ſhout for Joy and ſing*. In various Ways, by Deed or in Voice, all animal and vegetable Be-

ing form a Uniſon to the thankful Pſalmiſt's Song—*Thou crowneſt the Year with thy Goodneſs!*

And ſo will the Lord God Almighty crown the End of Time; when Earth ſhall no longer revolve, and when the circling Periods of the Year ſhall utterly ceaſe. The Fruits of Grace ſhall then be finally gathered into Glory. They ſhall appear with an everlaſting Luſtre; as well as be collected with everlaſting Love. God will *gather the Wheat into his Garner*, and all the Objects of his Salvation *unto Life eternal*. He will collect his People *from all Nations*, and his Redeemed from the uttermoſt *Coaſts of the Earth*. The Sea too ſhall give up her Dead; and the Univerſe of the Bleſt, human and angelic, ſhall ſhout with Joy. Their *Number* tranſcends the Arithmetic of Man, and can only be faintly expreſſed by *ten thouſand Times ten thouſand, and thouſands of thouſands*: And as to their *Song*; it is *loud* to penetrate, and to fill, all that God hath been pleaſed to create. *Worthy is the* Lamb (they ſhall ſhout) *that was ſlain, to receive Power, and Riches, and Wiſdom, and Strength, and Honor, and Glory, and Bleſſing. And every Creature which is in Heaven,*

ven, and on the Earth, and under the Earth, and ſuch as are in the Sea, and all that are in them, [at this time, ſhall proclaim] *ſaying, Bleſſing, and Honor, and Glory, and Power, be unto* HIM *that ſitteth upon the Throne, and unto the* LAMB *for ever and ever.* (Rev. v. 11, &c.)

This is the Voice of the *firſt Reſurrection,* over the Partakers of which the *ſecond Death* hath no Power. It is a Voice of everlaſting Joy and Thankſgiving, of Melody and of Peace. Not one diſcordant Note ſhall be heard among the heavenly Throng; but the whole Company of the Bleſt, innumerable in Members, and yet one in Spirit, ſhall ſing the high Praiſes of their GOD and Saviour for evermore.

What a glorious View will this illuſtrious *Aſſembly of the Firſt-born* afford? Clad with everlaſting Brightneſs, all refulgent from the Righteouſneſs of the great Redeemer; crowned with Glory, all proceeding from the Godhead of their Saviour; and triumphant in the victorious Strength of their almighty Head; what can be mentioned upon Earth with this unutterable Splendor? Dominions, Kingdoms, Empires, in their moſt dazzling

Luſtre, ſink into Shade before this tranſcendent Blaze of Glory; as the dim Spark of Light in the Glow-worm expires at the riſing Sun.

Here will commence the everlaſting Autumn, the ever-joyful Harveſt of Souls. The glorious Trinity will now behold the œconomical Labors of the gracious Covenant perfect and complete. The Godhead will pronounce over his whole new Creation, with a more glorious Emphaſis than over his firſt, *Behold, it is very good!* The Father will rejoice in the many Sons brought into Glory. The Son, as God-man, will triumph in the Victories of Redemption, now fully accompliſhed and obtained. The Holy Spirit will glory in the Perfection of that Salvation, which He carried forth into the Souls of the Redeemed, and by which He prepared them for Heaven. "All the Company of Heaven" will celebrate the Wonderful Love of their GOD, in the Deliverance and Exaltation of Myriads of poor Sinners to Thrones and Kingdoms from Miſery and Bondage. And ſhall theſe once poor Sinners be ſilent in his Praiſe? Shall theſe, for whom all this Joy ſhall ſpring up in Heaven, be dumb, or inſenſible to the

Joy

Joy they have cauſed?—O, if any can feel an Exceſs of Bleſſedneſs, and Gratitude, and Love, and Wonder, and Praiſe, in thoſe heavenly Regions; ſurely it muſt be THEY, for whoſe ſakes ſuch aſtoniſhing Glories have been ſhewn, when they merited nothing but Weeping, and Wailing, and Woe! What a Senſe of Adoration ſhall warm their Souls, when they hear that laſt Call of Grace from their dear Redeemer; *Come, ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the Foundation of the World!* And how will they attempt to anſwer, in a Strain of unutterable Joy, *Not unto us, O* LORD, *not unto us, but unto thy Name* we give *the Glory*, for all the *Mercy*, and all the *Truth*; which we ſaw, we taſted, we felt in Time; and which we now ſee and know to *endure for ever!* O what a triumphant Meeting will be here! JESUS, the Author of Salvation, receiving the whole Company of his Redeemed; theſe, adoring, and wondering, and exulting in their precious Redeemer; Prophets, Apoſtles, Paſtors, and Teachers, finding their *Crowns of rejoicing* among the beloved Souls who were called into Life through their Miniſtrations; happy Believers embracing with

Tranſport their faithful Leaders; and all the near and dear Friends of Grace kindling freſh and freſh Joy, as they meet with each other in Glory. O what a Scene will this glad Day preſent! Is *this* Heaven; *this* the Joy of thy Choſen, O Lord! When wilt thou appear? *How long! How long!*——O bleſſed be GOD for the joyful Proſpect! The Time of this Harveſt ſhall ſhortly come, when *both he that ſoweth, and he that reapeth, ſhall rejoice together.*

II. THE Autumn of the Year alſo preaches the Autumn of a Believer's Life upon Earth. When he is ripe for Heaven, it is not long before the Sickle of Death is put in, and the Spirit is gathered into the heavenly Garner. As ſoon as the Deſignations of Providence and Grace are fulfilled in him and by him, the Voice of GOD utters from Heaven the reviving Sound of—*Come up hither!*

III. THE Corn, when ripe, muſt be cut down before it can be gathered in; and, when gathered in, it muſt be thraſhed and winnowed ere it can be applied to Uſe.

So

So likewiſe the Chriſtian's Body muſt be laid low by Death, before his Soul can mount up to the Manſions of Bliſs: And thus Death, from being the ſoreſt Enemy, becomes one of the moſt bleſſed Friends to the Believer. Like a benevolent Angel, he burſts the Bars and Chains, which detain the Spirit in a World of Miſery, and uſhers in the Soul to a State of ineffable Joy. *Death is your's*, ſaid the Apoſtle: And, without Death, who could fully poſſeſs the Life eternal?—This is among the Wonders of Redemption; the very Curſe of Man becomes his Bleſſing; and that, which of itſelf, would have tumbled him down into Hell, now wafts him with a glorious Speed to the Manſions of Peace. In their laſt Hours, how many bleſſed Souls have thus perceived, that Death was their Mercy, their Privilege, their Joy? How many, when Nature could afford no Comfort, nor the Objects of Nature, have triumphed and rejoiced in the Foretaſte of the Glory, juſt revealing? How many have braved what Senſe conſiders with Horror; and nobly met this reputed Foe of human Life in his moſt diſmal Forms? Read the Martyr's Pangs, but read his Comforts too; and thou wilt find, believing

lieving Soul, that Murder and Tyranny had no Advantage over *him*. In all theſe Things, he was a Conqueror, and more than a Conqueror; through HIM that loved him. Almighty Strength, unſeen by Man, ſupported feeble Nature, and gave to a trembling Reed the unbowing Stability of an Oak. Founded on *the* ROCK, the Soul could not be moved; but, conſcious of repleniſhed Strength, looked down upon the agitated Waves with Tranquillity and Peace. The Martyr's Crown was the Martyr's Joy, his "Blood the Seed of "the Church," and his Peace is near the *golden Altar* of Salvation before the Throne in Heaven.

However tranquil and ſerene, yet every Believer's Death is a Martyrdom for Glory. He is cut off and becomes a Witneſs for GOD; and to a ſuperior Intereſt he parts with the World. And O what Joy have thouſands expreſſed at their laſt Hour, in the Proſpect of what was before them! However Men may prate in their Eaſe, or riot in the Thoughtleſſneſs of Folly; who would not wiſh to die like the Chriſtian? Poſſeſſing a Spirit, touched with the keeneſt Senſe of immortal things, not hardened into ſtoical Inſenſibility,

bility, he meets his Father's Will, rejoices in its wiſe and holy Diſpenſation, and receives it as the very beſt, which could have been appointed for him. When he ſees Heaven juſt opening to his View, if he feel a Reluctance for any thing, it would be for his Return to dwell longer upon Earth. Let any one read the Tranſlations (for ſuch their Migrations from the Body may be called) of *Rivet*, *Du Moulin*, and of Hundreds more; and then let him aſk his Heart, "Can *this* be Death!"—*this*, which opens the Door to Life; *this*, which is ſwallowed up with the Senſe of that Life even here! When the Soul aſcends to GOD, and leaves nothing but what is corrupt and defiled to ſink into Earth; hath it not abundant Reaſon indeed to exult; *O Death, where is thy Sting! O Grave where is thy Victory!*

It is true; not all GOD's People have this Joy of Harveſt in their Departure hence; but ſtill their Harveſt is ſafe, though the Weather be not ſo fine. When they are gathered in, they will ſurely have their Meaſure full of Glory, and want no more. The fore-running Joy (if it may be ſo called) is like the Voice from Heaven to Chriſt, (John xii. 30.)

30.) not ſo much for the Believer's Sake as for the Help of thoſe who remain behind. Whatever be the particular Circumſtances of their Death, all GOD's Redeemed have *Peace at the laſt*, and Peace for evermore.

BUT there are ſome, who, inſtead of being GOD's Corn, are like *the Graſs upon the Houſe-tops, wherewith the Mower filleth not his Hand, nor he, that bindeth Sheaves, his Boſom.* To *fill the Hand* means the Conſecration or Bleſſing of GOD; and *not* to fill it, conſequently, the Deſecration or Curſe. Thus we read of *withered Branches, Stubble, dry Stubble, Chaff, Tares, &c. whoſe End is burning.* The Wrath of the Lord, like a devouring Fire, ſhall burn up the Ungodly. They are not bound, as a Reaper bindeth his Sheaves, in *the Bundle of Life*, nor are they gathered into the heavenly Boſom: But they are winnowed away, like the Chaff, and caſt into everlaſting Fire. There the Worm of an accuſing Conſcience dieth not, and there the flaming Wrath of GOD is never extinguiſhed. What an awful, what an everlaſting, Separation muſt ſhortly take Place between the Fruit and the Leaves, the Corn and the Chaff, the Sheep

Sheep and the Goats; between all that Chriſt hath made *to paſs under the Rod*, claiming them as his own, and all that, in the Wickedneſs of their Hearts, diſdained to have *this Man to rule over them?* It was a fearful Sight to behold Mount *Sinai* covered with Fire and Clouds, with the awful Magnificence of an holy, yet a paternal GOD: But this was a minute Appearance, compared with the Circumſtances of that tremendous Day; when the Lord *ſhall ariſe terribly to ſhake*, not a ſingle Mountain, but the whole Earth; when the very *Heavens ſhall paſs away with a great Roar, the Elements melt with fervent Heat, the Earth and the Works that are therein burnt up*, and the univerſal Frame of Things *diſſolved*. If *Moſes*, a good Man and accepted into the Favor of God, could not but *exceedingly fear and quake* at the comparatively ſmall Diſplay of the HOLY ONE of *Iſrael*, appearing for Salvation; what will all wicked Men feel, at the ſolemn Approach of the Divine Majeſty, upon "the Wreck of Worlds," to let looſe his dreadful Wrath upon them, and that fiery Indignation, which ſhall *devour* his *Adverſaries?* This is an affecting Thought for Chriſtians; and it

ſhould

ſhould be an alarming Conſideration to thoſe, who *obey not the Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt.* For Perſons ſo awfully ſituated, one cannot help offering a Prayer, that they may have ſuch Grace to tremble now, as not to tremble for ever!

IV. IN this benign Seaſon of Autumn, the Huſbandman receives the Benefit of all his paſt Dependence upon the Conſtitution of Providence, which hath ordered the Seaſons and appointed Seed-time and Harveſt. The Farmer ſows in Confidence, that, at a certain Period, he ſhall reap. That Period he believes to be founded on the unalterable Purpoſe of GOD in the Conſtitution of Nature; and, according to his Belief, ſo it occurs. He gives implicit Credit to Providence, that it ſhall ſurely come to paſs: Nor is he diſappointed of his Hope.

So *Abraham*, both the Father of the Faithful and an eminent Inſtance of what the Faithful are, *believed God*, reſted upon his Truth as a ſure Foundation, *that what he had promiſed*, likely or unlikely to human View, *he was able to perform; and therefore it was imputed to him for Righteouſneſs.* In like manner, *he that ſoweth to the*

the Spirit, receiving his gracious Teſtimony concerning Jeſus, as the only Atonement and Juſtification, and proving that he has ſo received this Teſtimony by the Fruits of the Spirit within and without him, *ſhall of that Spirit reap Life everlaſting*. He believes GOD's Word and Promiſe concerning the mediatorial Office of the GOD-man; and Righteouſneſs is imputed and imparted to him, upon believing. He feels ſome immediate Benefit in this Life; for, *being juſtified by Faith, he has Peace with* GOD, accompanied with a Hope, a Joy, a Love, which can never die. He *knows in whom he hath believed*; and he commits all Things, belonging to his Body or Soul, to Time or Eternity, into his Hands; from a firm Confidence, that all will be wiſely ordered, and ſafely kept, for his preſent and eternal Good. As thoſe, who believe, from a natural Impreſſion of the Certainty of GOD's Diſpenſations, that Harveſt ſhall ſurely come, are juſtified by the Event and reap the Advantage of it; ſo the Chriſtian, who, by the Agency of the Divine Spirit, is brought to caſt himſelf upon Chriſt for the Pardon of his Sins and for a Title to Glory, is *now* (according to the Meaſure of Faith) as ſure

of

of Salvation, as the Immutability of GOD can make him; and the bleſſed Event, as ſure as GOD is true, muſt be Life everlaſting.

IN this Place we may digreſs a little to obſerve, that the Images and Symbols of divine Grace, found in natural Objects, though they aptly convey what is done *to* the Redeemed, and *in* them here, do not reach to what the Redeemer hath done *for* them in Heaven, nor to what he did, within himſelf or in his own Perſon, while upon Earth. The Illuſtrations from this World can only ſhadow forth what ſpiritually occurs to Believers *in* the World, or *while* they are in the World. They aſcend no higher, and probably for this Reaſon, that we might ſee, that our Redemption, though carried on *in* Nature, is *above* Nature, and might be convinced, that we owe the whole of it to an Almighty Hand. Hence, there are no natural Productions, which can repreſent to us the Atonement, the Righteouſneſs, the Interceſſion, and the other mediatory Offices of Chriſt with the Godhead. Theſe were all of too ſublime a Form for Nature in any reſpect to riſe to or illuſtrate. But, as it was neceſſary that GOD's People

ſhould

ſhould comprehend theſe ſuperior Bleſſings, they are not *without* their Illuſtration. It was, however, an Illuſtration, framed, ordained, and revealed by GOD himſelf, to which no human Mind could have been equal; becauſe, ſince the Fall, the human Mind is, in itſelf, naturally ignorant, and conſequently unable to form the Ideas, of ſpiritual Things. As the Objects of Nature then cannot delineate thoſe ſublime and heavenly Purpoſes; Man, in his natural State, likewiſe cannot conceive them. We have a ſtriking Proof of this in all the Wiſdom of the Heathen. Therefore, Sacrifices, Oblations, and the whole Œconomy of the ceremonial Law, were divinely appointed to convey Ideas, which the Objects of the Field, or Garden, or the World at large, could not naturally convey, and for which they were never deſigned. Theſe Rites, taken with their Commentary and Fulfillment in the New Teſtament, beautifully and graciouſly expreſs all, that is expedient for us to know; and by them we may receive, as well as the antient Believers under that Diſpenſation, a thouſand excellent Hints, both of what Chriſt *hath done* for us in the Fleſh, of what he *is doing* in Heaven, and of *our* future

future State of Happineſs and Glory with him. Their whole Purport is *Prophecy* and *Doctrine:* And under one or other of theſe may all the Contents of the ſacred Volume be arranged. A ſpiritual Faculty indeed is neceſſary to comprehend the Alluſions and Images; and ſo it is to make a right Uſe even of the Images in Nature, and of all the Works of GOD; but the Exerciſe of this Faculty, as well as the Faculty itſelf, is *the true Wiſdom* graciouſly given to Man, without which his higheſt Knowledge is but illuſtrious Ignorance, ariſing from the Fleſh, and periſhing with it. *David*, in the Spirit of this true Wiſdom, profeſſed to all *Iſrael*, that he knew the Purport of the Temple and its Services, *only* by Divine Tuition. *All*, ſays he, *in the Writing* [or Repreſentation given by *Moſes*] *from the Hand of God upon me* [by GOD's holy Inſpiration] HE MADE ME TO UNDERSTAND, even *all the Works of the Pattern*, or doctrinal Exemplar. (1 Chron. xxviii. 19.) By this Power, his Mind received a Capacity to comprehend the ſpiritual Senſe and Idea of all the legal Inſtitutions, and thoſe high Purpoſes of Grace which were implied in the viſible Patterns. (Hebr. viii. 5.) Read by this Capacity,

pacity, there appears ſuch an Harmony between the two Teſtaments, and in all the Revelations, Ordinations, and Providences of GOD, as ſtrikes the believing Soul with an elevated Awe, and delightful Surprize: And it cannot but look and admire, that JEHOVAH ſhould have done all, with ſo much Holineſs and Wiſdom in Arrangement, and with ſo much Mercy and Love in Manifeſtation, for ſuch a Creature, ſuch a ſinful Creature, as Man.

V. EVERY Plant in the Field and Garden, and indeed every Work throughout the Creation, is framed for ſome particular End or Purpoſe, in which it finds its Reſt. The vegetable Tribes have attained the Perfection deſigned, when they have produced their reſpective Flowers or Seeds. The great Object, with them all, is not ſo much the Nouriſhment of their own preſent Life, as the Proviſion for another; to obtain which, they employ all their Functions without Remiſſion. In all Animals too, we may obſerve the ſame general Law. They have an Object to exerciſe and fill every Faculty; and no Faculty is at Reſt, till it has diſcovered and obtained its Object.

THIS

THIS great philoſophic Truth grounded upon Nature, holds good, though carried much higher, in Theology or Grace. The great Author of all things, always acting wiſely, muſt act as ſurely, and with equal Deſign, in the ſpiritual as in the material World: And if with Deſign, then neceſſarily with Effect. As God is omnipotent, his Deſign muſt alſo have, not a *partial* or *accidental*, but a *poſitive* and *complete* Effect: And as He is omniſcient, both Deſign and Effect muſt be *perfectly diſpoſed* and *adapted* to each other. Thus far a mere Philoſopher may follow us; and thus far have heathen Philoſophers, by the mere Force of Reaſon, advanced and concluded: They, like ſome others, agreed to the Rule, but knew not how to apply it. The Chriſtian Philoſopher (by which Term I mean, not a proud Creature puffed up with the Conceit of its own Knowledge, but an humble Mind, made *wiſe unto Salvation*) is enabled to go farther, and to *enjoy* in his Heart thoſe Truths, which, at the moſt *they* could but *ſpeculate* upon in their Heads. Like them, he ſees they ſtand upon the Ground of *right Reaſon*, becauſe they are *Truths*; but he receives them and reſts upon them moſt entirely, becauſe,

above

above all Conſiderations of mere Reaſon, they are founded upon the *Revelation of God*, who is the *Author* of Truth. One of theſe Truths is the *Immortality* of the human Soul, which indeed the wiſer Heathens acknowledged upon the moſt rational Principles; but which, to the Chriſtian, is *enlightened* to a Demonſtration *by the Goſpel.* (2 Tim. i. 10.) If then we apply the Law of Nature before us to this Propoſition, we may conſider the *Faculty* of our Souls, and the *Object* of that Faculty.—Looking into ourſelves, we find IDEAS raiſed of an *eternal State*, a *Conſciouſneſs* of that infinite *Duration*, and a *Perception*, not only of its *Poſſibility*, but of its abſolutely *neceſſary Exiſtence:* We find alſo a WISH to participate that eternal Exiſtence, a *Graſping* after it as after a clear and perceptible *Object* before us, and a Shrinking from the very Notion of Annihilation as a dark and unnatural Void. Now, God's Works cannot be uſeleſs; and as He placed the Deſires of Immortality in the Mind; He would have created a uſeleſs Work in forming thoſe Faculties and Capacities, if he had not alſo created an *End* to fulfill them. This Immortality then muſt be the Object and

the Reſt of theſe Faculties; for our Faculties cannot be ſaid to find their *Reſt* in ceaſing *to be;* becauſe *Reſt* is a *relative* Term, and neceſſarily implies a *Being*. It ſeems abſurd to ſay, that any thing *reſts*, which doth *not exiſt*. It is alſo evident that the Mind doth not obtain *that* Reſt in this preſent State, which it *conceives*, and which it *covets*. Neither its Conceptions nor Volitions are anſwered here. Yet it ſhudders, with a melancholy Horror, at the very Doubt of not obtaining them. With all the Atheiſm of Sin in our Nature, we cannot look with *Eaſe* at this black Atheiſm, which would deprive GOD of ſome propoſed End in us, and *us* of that End for which we exiſt. For to ſay that we exiſt only to crawl a few Years upon Earth, and to live in Expectation and die in Diſappointment, is charging the Author of all Wiſdom with natural and moral Defects without Number, with Cauſes deficient in Deſign, and with Ends void of all Goodneſs, Mercy, or Uſe. But, allowing this to be impoſſible, we may look into ourſelves, and ſee a *Faculty*, capable of *comprehending* Immortality, capable too of *deſiring* it as an ultimate Good, and extremely unſatisfied with the very Notion

of

of not obtaining it. Either, therefore, *Immortality* is the *Object* of that mental *Faculty* which ſeeks it as its Reſt; or GOD hath created a Faculty *without* an Object. If he would avoid this latter Propoſition, (which is a Blaſphemy againſt the Wiſdom and Power of GOD in his greateſt Work upon Earth) we muſt then adopt this Concluſion; that GOD himſelf hath impreſſed our Souls with the *Thought* of Immortality, given them an impetuous *Deſire* after this Immortality, and ſo having framed this *Faculty* for that *Object*, hath made it the Deſign of our Being, and our ultimate Reſt. Thus, according to the Poet,

The Soul, uneaſy and confined from Home,
Reſts and expatiates in a Life to come.

On the other hand, remove the Concluſion; and doth not this impious Abſurdity follow? An all-wiſe and omnipotent Being hath created a Work without Deſign, made a Tendency which loſes its End, and committed (O horrible to ſay!) ſuch an Offence againſt immutable Truth, as to form Premiſes with erroneous Concluſions, or (what is juſt as erroneous) with none at all. Yet this is the Logic of all the very wiſe Heads, who, from the Beginning of the World,

have taken upon them to diſpute againſt the Immortality of the Soul.

But other great and comfortable Truths are ſuggeſted to us by a View of the fixed Purpoſe of God in the Objects of Nature.

We have conſidered, from Reaſon, the Neceſſity of the Soul's Immortality, which is abundantly confirmed by divine Revelation. Revelation however doth not leave us here, but carries us on to a Knowledge, which Reaſon could never have attained; for it not only aſſures us of Immortality, but explains the *Condition* of Men in it, with other Circumſtances of the utmoſt Magnitude and Importance. We find it revealed, for inſtance, that, though Man be created naturally immortal, he hath loſt by Sin the original *Happineſs* which attended his Immortality, and is now plunged into a State of Impurity, which hath annexed *Miſery* in its ſtead. In other Words, he hath loſt that holy *Faculty*, which finds its *Object* in God and his Will, and has obtained a ſinful Faculty, which ſeeks an Object of Gratification any where and every where beſide, and becomes wretched becauſe it can no where obtain it. It is ſo in this World, where there are many Things to meet with the *animal* Part of his

his Nature; though none of them do or can ſatisfy the Longings of the *immortal* Part. In the World of Spirits, where not even theſe low Palliations can be found, human Miſery is completed: And one great Occaſion of it will be, what Divines uſually call the *pœna damni*, that *Pain of Loſs* of which we are treating. The Soul may rove and be reſtleſs, but ſhall not find; and the Emphaſis of the Diſtreſs will be, that the unhappy Beings, who may feel it, will know that they *never* can find, and muſt therefore be reſtleſs ſtill. On the other hand, to the Children of GOD is imparted a ſpiritual Faculty, in the Stead of what was originally loſt, which ſeeks GOD as the great Object of all its Exerciſe, and the great Fulfillment of all its Capacities. Here it *reſts*. Like *Noah's* Dove, it has at length found ſomewhat to ſtay upon. It is no longer whirled in the Circumference of Things, but finds a Center, which Center is *Reſt itſelf*. Thus (according to the Scripture) thoſe, *who have believed, do enter into Reſt, and have ceaſed from their own Works, as God did from his*. They have found that Object which fills their Faculty, and, by filling it with that *Fullneſs which filleth all in all*,

conſtitutes every Particle of its true Happineſs both here and hereafter. This Object is GOD himſelf, *who only* HATH *Immortality* as his own; and in proportion as Believers are enabled to exerciſe the ſpiritual Faculty of divine Grace upon this Object, they are happy, fixed, and at Reſt. They have found their true Center and Stay, the Want of which would make them, as it doth all other Men, reſtleſs and uneaſy, always in Chace of ſolid Peace, but never finding more than its Shadow. The Faculty, filled in all its Meaſure from GOD, who is its Object, can want nothing; not only becauſe *itſelf* is filled for the preſent, but becauſe it will always participate that FULLNESS, or the divine and all-ſufficient Being, who fills all Expanſion, all Time, all Exiſtence, in an Inſtant, yet for Ever; and to whom the univerſal ALL is an infinite HERE and an everlaſting Now. Hence we ſee, that, as the Soul of Man was originally made for GOD, it can never be eternally happy without Him. If it ſeek Peace elſewhere, it can find none. If it depart from this World without finding Him, it launches into an Abyſs, where HE will not be found in Peace for ever. Hence alſo we ſee, that

that the Lord having granted to his Redeemed the Faculty of his Grace and divine Nature, the Object of which is HIMSELF in Glory; this Faculty inclines the Soul in holy Fervor and bleſſed Hope, through all the Circumſtances and Obſtructions of this mortal Life, to that heavenly Object as its Fullneſs and its End. *Whom have I in Heaven but Thee* (ſays ſuch a Soul); *or what do I deſire upon Earth in compariſon of Thee? Thou art my Help and my Deliverer; make no long tarrying, O my God!*——The anſwer is; *Surely, I come quickly:* AND, *ye, that hunger now, ſhall be filled.*

ONE important Reflection more, which ſeems neceſſarily to ariſe from the preſent Matter of Conſideration, muſt not be paſſed by. If GOD hath ordained, that all the Powers in the natural World ſhall work for certain and unfruſtrable Ends: And if, in the ſpiritual World, there are like Conformities between Faculties and Objects; then ſurely its Operations and Effects muſt, at the leaſt, be equally certain and unfruſtrable. This Argument is convincingly drawn *a fortiori*; for if the ſpiritual Exiſtences are of higher Importance than the merely material, as perhaps

nobody will deny; then GOD, having eſtabliſhed certain Effects to reſult from certain Cauſes in the one, will have had a proportionate Regard to enſure them in the other. If the Operations of Nature are by no Means left to Chance, but are evidently carried on by the certain Energy of the divine Providence; ſhall not the Salvation of his People, to effect which coſt him no leſs than the Sufferings and Death of his Son, be ordered in all Things and ſure? Shall not the final Happineſs of his Redeemed, for which he hath, through every Age, taken ſuch peculiar Care, and for which from before all Ages framed his Covenant, as well as framed a World to illuſtrate, be fixed and irrefragable? *Let God be true* who hath declared it by ſo many infallible Tokens, *and every Man a Liar* who preſumes to deny them. All GOD's Works confirm the ſalutary Truths of his Word. Every Operation in Nature yields its Portion of Evidence. The Reaſon of Things alſo confirms the ſure Decree: And indeed the Reaſon of Man that Particle of Truth univerſal, when diveſted of Prejudice and unclogged by Sin, aſſents to the Propriety of ſuch a Determination. But, above all, the Wiſ-

dom

dom of GOD himſelf, and the Voice of GOD in his Word which is his Wiſdom revealed, have rendered theſe Concluſions, drawn from that and other Evidences, *infallible*; becauſe he hath *ſhewed the Immutability of his Counſel* and *interpoſed himſelf by an Oath to accompliſh them.* (Heb. vi. 17.) *The Mountains ſhall depart, and the Hills be removed; but my Kindneſs ſhall not depart from thee, neither ſhall the Covenant of my Peace be removed, ſaith the* LORD *that hath Mercy on thee.* (Iſaiah liv. 10.) Thus alſo ſaith Chriſt; *I give unto them* [his Sheep] *eternal Life; and they ſhall never periſh, neither ſhall any pluck them out of my Hand.* For, *this is the* FATHER's *Will, which hath ſent me, that of* ALL *which he hath given me, I ſhould loſe* NOTHING; *but ſhould raiſe it up again at the laſt Day. And this is the Will of him that ſent me, that* EVERY ONE *which ſeeth the* SON, *and believeth on him, may have everlaſting Life; and I will raiſe him up at the laſt Day.* (Comp. John x. 28. with vi. 39, 40.) This is the Teſtimony of the FATHER and the SON: And what ſaith the SPIRIT of Truth, ſpeaking by the Apoſtle? *Neither Death, nor Life, nor Angels, nor Principalities, nor Powers, nor*

Things preſent, nor Things to come, nor Height, nor Depth, nor any other Creature, ſhall be able to ſeparate us from the Love of God, which is in Chriſt Jeſus. (Rom. viii. 38, 39.) He that cannot believe this immenſe, this dignified Evidence, could not believe any Atteſtations, even *though one roſe again from the Dead* to make them.

VI. THE Diviſion of numberleſs Leaves and Flowers into *three* Members or Petals upon one and the ſame Stalk, affords the Mind a Hint of frequent Meditation upon that fundamental Doctrine of Chriſtianity, the Trinity in Unity, and Unity in Trinity, for ever to be worſhipped and adored.

IT was not an unſolid Maxim of the late Mr. *Baxter* (whatever may be thought of ſome of his Notions) that "in a right "Scheme of Theology, Unity in Trinity "would go through the whole Method;" becauſe (ſays he) "the Divine Trinity in "Unity hath expreſſed itſelf in the whole "Frame of Nature and Morality." (See his Life, P. ii. p. 297. and P. iii. p. 69.) It is ſo in the heavenly Fluids, in earthly Animals and Plants, and in the mortal and immortal Part of Man. It is the Voice of

of the Scripture, the very Revelation of GOD. If we are not *wiſe above what is written,* or what is wrought, by JEHOVAH himſelf; or rather, if we are wiſe enough, through Grace, to underſtand his Mind and Will in his Works and Word, we ſhall ſee, that the whole of our Salvation is concerned in the experimental Knowledge of this Truth; that the Firſt Perſon is our Father in Chriſt and by the Spirit, that the Second Perſon is our Redeemer and Head through the Father and Spirit, and that the Third Perſon is our Reſtorer and Sanctifier in the Son and the Father. The Knowledge, not theoretic or ſpeculative, but gracious and faithful, of this ſublime Myſtery is the Maſter-Key to unlock the other great Myſteries and Principles of the Chriſtian's Expectation and Hope. The Ignorance of this is the Parent of manifold Errors, uſeleſs and contradictory in themſelves, and oppoſite to the Light, the Life, and the Salvation of GOD.

1. Jehovah—Father
2. Jehovah—Son } One Jehovah.
3. Jehovah—Spirit

1. GOD—Creator
2. GOD—Redeemer } One GOD.
3. GOD—Sanctifier

1. Eſſence—Love
2. Eſſence—Wiſdom } One Eſſence.
3. Eſſence—Power

In the Creatures.

1. Fire — —
2. Light — — } One Sun.
3. Matter — —

1. Body, or Subſtance
2. Soul, or Affection } One Man.
3. Spirit, or Mind

1. Fire — — } Three Diſtinctions in One
2. Light — — } Subſtance of the
3. Spirit — — } material Heavens.

There are three *that bear record in Heaven* [the ſpiritual World] *the* FATHER, *the* WORD, *and the* HOLY GHOST; *And theſe* THREE *are* ONE: *And there are* three *that bear Witneſs in Earth, the* Spirit, *the* Water, *and the* Blood; *and theſe agree in* one.

one. *If we receive the Witneſs of Men, the Witneſs of God is greater.* John v. 7, 8, 9.

VII. IN Autumn, the Huſbandman gathers the Seeds for ſucceeding Crops. Theſe contain the *Germen*, or Principle, of a new Life, which, upon the Corruption and Decay of the outward Shell, ſprings up and appears.

In like Manner, when the Believer drops his Body on the Earth, it ſhall one Day ſpring up again; not a natural Body, as it was ſown, but a ſpiritual Body with an incorruptible Life. The natural Body muſt rot and decay, becauſe it is wholly contaminated by Corruption and Sin; but that Principle of Life, which this outward Shell contains, being radically immortal, and, cleanſed by the Purification of the Redeemer, ſhall then be radically impeccable too. Happineſs, everlaſting Happineſs, will therefore enſue; and the new-born Body, united to its new-born Soul, ſhall be with GOD, and enjoy GOD, for evermore.

TO CONCLUDE. How rich, and how various, are the temporal Benefits, with which GOD hath endowed his Creature, MAN?

MAN? The Earth pours forth the moſt delicious and wholeſome Productions, to ſatiate his Appetite, and to invigorate his Frame. The Fields wave with Corn, to give him Bread; the Flocks offer their Exceſs of Wool, to keep him warm; Vineyards afford him Wine, the Paſtures Meat, and the choiceſt Trees their moſt exquiſite Fruit. For him, the Horſe and the Ox are ready Drudges, content with the Offal which he cannot uſe, or with the ſpontaneous Growth of the Soil, or at moſt with a ſmall Portion of the Increaſe which their own Labor procures. For him, the Herds deny their Offspring the profluent Juice, and yield themſelves the patient Victims of the deadly Knife. The Birds delight to refreſh him by their harmonious Voice, and call upon his Heart to ſound a ſublimer Praiſe. The Bees hum their low Applauſe, and, conſcious (as it were) of the Meanneſs of their Song, make up in Labor what they want in Tune. Theſe pay a dulcified Tribute to their ſublunary Lord. In a Word, view the World around; explore the Fields; viſit the Rivers, or the briny Shores; and ſee, if every Thing, which yields at all, doth not yield either Food,

or

or Health, or Delight, to Man.—But, is he thankful to his Creator for his Profuſion of Bleſſings? Doth he expreſs that Thankfulneſs by a true and proper Uſe of ſuch overflowing Mercies? Or is not the plenteous Table abuſed by Gluttony, and the chearful Viand by Drunkenneſs? His Health by Acts of Riot, and his Strength by repeated Sins? Inſtead of humble Praiſe, doth he not inſolently reproach his great Benefactor, by trampling on his Gifts before his Eyes?—And yet, manifold and abundant as theſe Bounties are, they all grow upon a World, which is *under the Curſe*, and for a Creature which incurred it—upon a World, which, if there had been no Mercy beyond it, or if all its Productions had been analogous to his Sins, would have produced nothing but Thiſtles, and Thorns, and bitter Herbs. But let him look above the Soil beneath his Feet; and ſee the quick Succeſſion of providential Good pouring round him from the Skies. Theſe alſo contain an inexhauſtible Fund of Bleſſing for unthinking, or ill-thinking Man. From them are diſtilled the kindly Dews; from them deſcend the flowing Rains; and through them are conveyed all

all the genial Influences of the vaſt Expanſe, which ſurrounds the World.—— Who thinks of *theſe* with grateful Praiſe? Who offers the Firſt-fruits of Thankſgiving to the great Author of continual Good?——Above all; that wonderful Orb of Day, which emits the chearful Light, by which we behold the other Treaſures of the Creator's Power, exerts a certain and well-proportioned Strength to fructify, adorn, and carry on the whole Syſtem of Being about us. This glorious Luminary, with the Moon and innumerable Stars, attracts our Eyes upward, and, in a Manner, demands an Elevation of our Minds to HIM that made them.—But who obeys the duteous Call? Who thanks the Almighty for the Light of the Day? Who bleſſes him for his Moon, or for the Stars of the Night? We all behold the Works; but do all adore the great Architect, who formed them? If, as the Poet ſings,

An undevout Aſtronomer is mad;

who are truly or always in their Senſes? And upon the Charge of Unthankfulneſs, which of us all can caſt the firſt Stone at his Brother?—Yet all theſe Objects of

Heaven

Heaven and Earth are working for and attending upon Man: He is their "Center, "in Reſpect of final Cauſes;" and they are made, not to give Luſtre, or produce Fruit for themſelves, but for him. They indeed do center in him. His Welfare is the Object of their Exiſtence; and they have no viſible End of Being beyond him. They all point to him; and at the ſame Time all point him to God. That is *his* only Center: And there only he finds *his* Reſt.—We ſee alſo in Nature a double Motion. The Moon moves round the Earth, and attends its Motion implicitly throughout her Orbit. Other vaſt Orbs have inferior Orbs encircling them, obeying them in their Courſes, and never departing from their Path. But their common, univerſal Center is the Sun. By him they ſhine, and round him whatever Motions they make beſide, they uniformly revolve. So likewiſe the Creatures of the Earth are the Satellites of Man; as he is a Satellite to God. They move round him and for him; while he, together with them, have their great Center in the Almighty. It is the Glory of the inferior Creatures, to demonſtrate to *Man* their Maker's Wiſdom and Power. It is the Glory

Glory of Man to render *their* Praiſe vocal by offering up *his own*. His Wiſdom it is to concentrate the diffuſive Rays of divine Beneficence, that his Soul may be more enlightened, and his Heart the more warmed with Love. And his Happineſs conſiſts in obeying his Center, as the Cauſe of his Motion and the Point of his Reſt. The Earth revolves, and revolves with Rapidity. Its Progreſs is ſwift beyond human Conception. But, with all this Vehemence, it obtains a real Reſt. Its Inhabitants cannot feel the impetuous Whirl; nor are they alarmed at paſſing through the Air with a Courſe of above 58,000 Miles in an Hour; *i. e.* with a Velocity 140 Times greater than that of a Cannon-ball. The Reaſon is; the World obeys its Center, without the leaſt Aberration; and, therefore, though rapid in Motion, it partakes the Calm of Reſt. Could it wander ever ſo little, it muſt feel the Jar of Diſcord. In the Loſs of its proper Place, it would meet continual Repulſion; till, convulſed in its own Frame, and claſhing with the Frame of all Things beſides, it would receive an entire Diſſolution. So the bleſt Inhabitants of Heaven, like the Stars of Heaven, move in their Courſes; yet, moving

with

with GOD, the Center of their Being, they enjoy the Felicity of his Reſt. They are ever employed, ever in Activity: Yet always ſerene, always in Bliſs. Fallen Spirits, on the contrary, are *wandering Stars*, without Stay or Center; and for them is conſequently reſerved the *Blackneſs* and all the Diſorders *of Darkneſs for ever*. Again; what can be quicker than a Thought? It can traverſe over the Earth, and paſs to the Sun, or through all we can perceive or cogitate, in a Moment. Yet our Thought is ſtill at Home. Its Center is in our Mind, and, in all its Excurſion, finds its Reſt within us. In like Manner, holy Spirits, though they may deſcend to Earth, or pervade all the Syſtems of univerſal Nature, are never abſent from GOD, nor out of Heaven. He is the Point of their Reſt, and the Axis of their Motion.

When Man fell from GOD, he left the Orbit aſſigned him; and, in conſequence, all the Faculties of his Soul fell into Confuſion. They had loſt their Center, and were at no Stay. Like *Cain*, Man has been a Wanderer from that unhappy Day. The Chaös of the Poets, is no Fable applied to his Mind. He ruſhed then, and he

he ruſhes now, unleſs reſtrained, precipitately into Ruin. His Body crumbles into Atoms, and his Soul, unable of itſelf to recover its Center, ſtill wanders on in Regions of *outer Darkneſs*, where GOD withholds his Rays, and not a Glimmer of Comfort can ſhine. Like an Orb, too remote from its Place, Man's fallen Nature is now diſordered, dark, and frigid: And it muſt remain ſo, till by Mercy Man be brought into his Place again.

Our Wiſdom is to obſerve GOD's Works, and to keep them, not in our Eyes only, but in our Hearts. *Whoſo is wiſe* (ſays the Pſalmiſt), *and will obſerve theſe Things; even they ſhall underſtand the Loving-kindneſs of the* LORD. (Pſalm cvii. 43.) We are to obſerve them indeed, yet not for themſelves as the End, but as the Mirror in which we may behold the Goodneſs and Majeſty of our Maker, and the Medium through which we may contemplate heavenly Things. When we can do this, we have obtained *Wiſdom*—Wiſdom, to uſe rightly and apply truly the natural Objects—and Wiſdom, to underſtand, beyond the Forms of Matter, what they repreſent of the loving Kindneſs of the Lord. We ſhall then have arrived at one great

great Purpoſe of our Being on Earth, and ſhall no longer creep upon it as poor Reptiles who have no better Home, but ſhall walk erect as "human half divine," and uſe it as a Step or Threſhold to our heavenly Manſion. Here behold the DIGNITY OF MAN; not that wretched Dignity, which he can ſhare as an Animal, and of which ſome ſo loudly boaſt; but that, which he enjoys as a Son of GOD, and an Heir of his glorious Kingdom: Not the earthly Superiority he holds above the Brutes; but his Approximation to the Skies, and his gracious Intercourſe with Heaven: Not his Eminence with vain and dying Man, but his Conſociation with GOD.—Well then, may we aſk ourſelves, and aſk the World, *What hath God wrought?* ——We have ſeen and do ſee his Works upon the Earth. Theſe, indeed, are Part of what GOD hath wrought. But they are minute and trifling all, compared with what he hath formed in Things divine, and beyond the Skies. They are but as a Ladder to the Building, or as a Workman's Scaffold on the Outſide of the Palace. The Tabernacle likewiſe and all its Services, though juſt and correct, yielded but a faint Glimmering of thoſe heavenly

heavenly Things, which they were intended to repreſent. In that Reſpect, and becauſe they were made of corruptible Subſtances, they could not but be (as the Apoſtle calls them) *weak and beggarly Elements*—too fragile to continue long, too mean exactly to deſcribe. And though the Furniture of this vaſt Frame of Things about us incomparably exceeds in Grandeur the Pomp of thoſe legal Inſtitutions; yet even this is but a poor Scene, calculated as it is to convey ſome Notices of Splendor, when placed with that exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory, which blazes round the *Holieſt of all*. What is the Sun, for Inſtance, in all his Luſtre, compared with that great Luminary of Heaven, who is LIGHT himſelf, Light inacceſſible, Light eſſential, Light eternal? A Ray of it, deſcending upon St. *Paul* near *Damaſcus*, ſwallowed up the meridian Splendor of the Sun, as though it had been but a Spark or an Atom. What then ſhall the full and unveiled Brightneſs be, where JEHOVAH himſelf is the only, and the unbounded Light?—It is too much for mortal Eye, too much for human Reaſon, in their preſent Imbecillity, to look upon and contemplate.— *What hath God*

God wrought alſo for THEE, O Believer? Canſt thou tell, WHAT *He hath done for thy Soul?*—He hath done Works, ſurpaſſing in Grace all that was ever ſhown to Angels; Works ſurpaſſing in Glory all that was ever conceived by Men.—This is a faint Outline of what he hath done. The Lord (JEHOVAH is his Name) quitted his celeſtial Throne, and aſſumed the humble Fleſh of Man, that he might raiſe him from the Dunghill of Pollution to the Participation of his holy Kingdom. He ſuffered, groaned, and died, in human Clay, to eſtabliſh a full Atonement for human Sin: And he lived, atoned, and roſe again, to bring in for Man an everlaſting Righteouſneſs. He then *aſcended up on high, having led Captivity captive*, and is entered into the heavenly Place, as the great High-prieſt of his People, to reconcile GOD to Man, and to lift up Man to his GOD. In a Word; if we look at what he hath done in the material World; we may, in the aſtoniſhed Adoration of the Pſalmiſt, ejaculate; LORD, *how manifold are thy works; in Wiſdom haſt thou made them* ALL: *The Earth is full of thy Riches!*——But, if we attempt to ſurvey what his divine Power hath wrought

wrought in the ſpiritual Creation; Wonder, Love, and Rapture will ſeize us at once; and all the Powers of our Souls muſt pour forth that ardent Exclamation; *O the Depth of the Riches both of the Wiſdom and Knowledge of* GOD! *How inſcrutable are his Decrees! And how unſearchable his Ways!—For of* HIM, *and through* HIM, *and to* HIM, *are* ALL *Things: To him be the Glory, for ever! Amen.*

POEMS.

Paraphraſtic Verſion of PSALM III.

REDEEMING LORD, attend thy Servant's Pray'r,
Thy Strength impart, and all my Soul prepare;
For lo! in wide Array, before my Eyes,
Hoſts follow Hoſts, and Foes on Foes ariſe!

Th' alluring World, with her unnumber'd Snares,
Strong Unbelief with marſhall'd Doubts and Fears,
And ſubtle Sin, that, dreſt in ſmootheſt Guiles,
Stabs while ſhe courts and murders when ſhe ſmiles;
Led by th' infernal Chief, my Soul aſſail,
And urge their utmoſt Efforts to prevail.
Nor only Bands of Earth and Hell combine,
By Force or Stratagem, to undermine
My Ground of Hope; but a worſe Mate within,
Pander of Satan and a Spy for Sin,
Slyly admits or impudently throws
A Gate wide-open'd to beſieging Foes.
From Art ſo deep, and Enmity ſo bold,
LORD, who can ſave but Thou, or who uphold?

When tearful Sorrows ſwells its briny Tide,
How prompt the laughing Sons of Earth deride?

How few are found to reliſh or condole
With the fine Joys or Sentiments of Soul?
Debas'd in all but Shape, how many ſuit
Congenial with the Herd, as Brute with Brute?
Could Grace, or wild, or rugged leave the Mind;
What Art could poliſh, or what Force can bind?
Yet who can feel the Chriſtian's Joy or Fear?
Nature muſt fail in all her Pow'rs here:
'Tis Grace gives Sympathy with Grace alone,
And yields the Soul a Senſe, to Fleſh unknown.

No wonder, then, th' unfeeling World can ſay;
"In vain my Soul ſhall mourn, in vain may pray;
"No Help in WHOM I worſhip now remains;
"No Fruit of Pains and Tears, but Tears and Pains;
"That, ſure, if God my Claims of Favor own,
"My Cry would meet his Ear, his Heart my Groan."—
LORD, bow thine Ear; and let my Mockers ſee,
That Grace and Glory are enough for me!

To thee, O GOD, my earlieſt Hopes ariſe:
To thee, who lift'ſt my Head, I lift my Eyes!—
If GOD's my Shield, what Danger ſhould I fear?
If GOD's my Glory, why for Mortals care?

Oft to the LORD I cried with plaintive Voice,
As oft He heard, and bade my Heart rejoice.
Deſcending mildly from his holy Hill,
My Soul He deign'd to love, and deign'd to fill
With choſen Bleſſings from his gracious Throne,
With Joys to Saints and Seraphs only known.
O could my Mockers this Salvation find,
Its gentle Peace would calm their reſtleſs Mind;
Nor bitter Taunts dwell longer on their Tongues,
But ſocial Love, and Peace, and holy Songs.

In

In quiet Reſt my Heart may well repoſe,
Since, LORD, my Heart thy Truth and Love incloſe;
And well my Soul to Duty riſe again,
If THOU with riſing Strength my Soul ſuſtain.

Why ſhould I fear, or why admit a Doubt,
Though Foes ten thouſand compaſs me about;
Though Earth, in all her Rage or all her Pride,
Or envious Hell, ſo cloſe to Earth allied?
Though theſe unite, and arm the Foes within,
And point the whole Artillery of Sin;
Why ſhould I fear?—The Cauſe is not my own:
The War is thine, O LORD, and thine alone.
To THEE I look, when murd'ring Hoſts aſſail;
I look, I feel thy Pow'r, and then prevail.

O how my Heart with bounding Joy can ſpring,
And how my Lips thine hallow'd Praiſes ſing;
When, firm in Faith, my Spirit can record,
That all Salvation flows from THEE, the LORD;
That all thy Bleſſings, like the Sun or Dew,
Or Heav'n itſelf, are ever free and new,
That, what the Soul of Glory can receive,
THOU to thy choſen Race wilt ſurely give;
And that this Race, by Nature Worms of Earth,
May claim the Whole, as their's, by Right of Birth;
For, heav'nly born, and Heav'n their native Home,
Thou art their Father, *they* thy Sons become!

II.

Safety every where in God.

[Written upon the Atlantic Ocean, in June, 1776.]

I.

WHILE o'er the raging Main I ſail
To viſit diſtant Plains,
I will not fear, nor can I fail,
For God my Life ſuſtains.

II.

If He within his ſpacious Hand
Oceans and Seas enfold,
And mete all Heav'n with his Span,
And all the Earth uphold;

III.

If He the Nations, as a Drop,
Or, light as Duſt, eſteem,
And, lifting mighty Mountains up,
Suſpend them on his Beam:

IV.

If He, at one commanding Sound,
The Whole from Nothing brought,
And all, that fills th' Expanſe around,
Could faſhion with a Thought:

V.

If He, my Father and my God,
Can Worlds on Worlds ſupply;
Shall I, an Atom or a Clod,
His promis'd Pow'r deny?

VI.

IX.

Thither, Lord, I trembling run,
Void of Refuge and undone:
And if thou reject my Pray'r,
Ruin'd, loſt, I'll periſh there!——

X.

Thus my melting Soul did moan,
Pouring her embitter'd Groan;
Not perceiving JESUS nigh,
All attentive to my Cry.

XI.

What Benignity of Grace
Beam'd, as Light, o'er all his Face,
When, within theſe Wounds of mine,
Thus he pour'd his Oil and Wine!

XII.

"Read, he ſaid, my faithful Word;
They that truſt upon the Lord,
Shall Confuſion never know,
Nor deſcend the Path to Woe.

XIII.

Bring thy Burden, and thy Pain;
This I'll heal, and That ſuſtain:
Son, revive; thou ſhalt not fail;
Look to me, and thus prevail."

V.

Paraphraſtic Verſion of Pſalm LI.

MERCY I cry, for Mercy, Lord, I moan
And upward look to Thee, and Thee alone.
My Sorrows mark, my pungent Mis'ry weigh,
And all my Sin in Mercy blot away:
Thy Loving-kindneſs forms my only Plea;
Only thy tender Love can comfort me.
High on each other my Tranſgreſſions riſe
A hideous Mountain to my frighten'd Eyes:
Its Baſe deſcends to Hell; its Summit ſtands
And bids the Vengeance of thy wrathful Hands.
A daring Rebel, careleſs of thy Sight,
I ruſh'd on Sin, oppoſing Love and Light:
What can I ſay!—thy Vengeance would be juſt,
If Vengeance down to Hell my Soul ſhould thruſt.

Before Earth's tainted Air my Vitals drew,
Or ere my waken'd Senſe pale Sorrow knew,
Sin, like a Poiſon, darted through my Frame,
And I, unborn, a Worm pollute became:
Thus if my Soul from Sin was inſecure,
Lodg'd in the Womb; when, Lord, could I be pure?

Thou God of Truth, the holy Truth within
Is thy Beheſt from Man, and Hate of Sin.
O let thy Wiſdom teach me both to chuſe,
What may delight Thee, and, what not, refuſe.
Sprinkle my Nature with the Blood divine,
And let thy ſhining Robe upon me ſhine.
That cleanſing Blood alone can give me Joy,
Alone the Shame and Guilt of Sin deſtroy:

O may

O may the precious Balm its Force impart,
And, once again, reſtore my languid Heart.
So ſhall my broken Bones with Strength rejoin
To bleſs the Pow'r of Mercy all-divine.

Again, in Senſe of Sin, my Spirit cries;
Turn from my hated Guilt thy holy Eyes:
Lord, hide my Errors, with full blotting hide
By deep Effuſions from my Saviour's Side.
Nor let me filthy be, as long I've been,
But cleanſe my naughty Heart, and keep it clean:
A firm ſtrong Spirit in my Breaſt renew,
True like thine own, and by thine own kept true.
From thy dear Preſence caſt me not away,
But let thy Holy Spirit with me ſtay,
And thy Salvation's Joy within revive,
Whence all my future Hopes their Birth derive.
Then ſhall my pardon'd Tongue thy Mercies tell
To Sinners tott'ring on the Verge of Hell;
Theſe then ſhall own the Reach of ſov'reign Grace,
Nor wander wider from thy holy Ways.

God of my Life, of my Salvation God,
Take from my ſinking Soul thy heavy Rod,
From fouleſt Crimes, from worſt of Errors ſave,
And a whole Heart of Praiſe thyſelf ſhalt have.
Though poor Return, the Tribute of my Lyre,
Moſt I can bring, is moſt thy kind Deſire.
For, from the Earth, what Off'rings to thy Throne
Can Creatures pay, but what were firſt thine own?
And if thine own, what Plea can theſe maintain,
Who yield thy mangled Gifts to Thee again?

To cleanſe one Sin the World could not ſuffice:
A broken Heart's a truer Sacrifice.
From broken Hearts, beat down from native Pride,
Thou, Lord, haſt promis'd not to turn aſide:

And if ſuch Favor ſuch a Wretch might ſee,
GOD of my Hopes, turn not aſide from me!

Build up thy Zion, and for Glory build;
Let all her Courts be with thy Children fill'd:
Then ſhall their Praiſe, like ſacred Incenſe, riſe,
And with rich Odors fill the bright'ning Skies;
Then, while they preſs thy Throne in bliſsful Throng,
Mercy ſhall give the Theme, and Grace indite the Song.

VI.

Upon Recovery from a dangerous Sickneſs abroad.

I.

AMID the gloomy Scenes of varied Woe,
Amid the furious Rage of thund'ring War,
Diſeaſe (no Partizan, but gen'ral Foe)
Scatters her waſting Miſeries afar.

II.

Diſeaſe, like Death, with pale and direful Face,
And fierce, like Death, to ſeize th' appointed Prey,
Stalk'd lately to my Bed with gloomy Pace,
Leading her Train of Horrors and Diſmay.

III.

Calmly I view'd, with Faith's unclouded Eye,
The haggard Form; with Patience gave an Ear
To Threats repeated, that my Hopes ſhould die,
And all my gracious Proſpects diſappear.

IV.

IV.

Arm'd in my Saviour's Might, by Promiſe borne
Above the worſt of Death or fell Diſeaſe;
My Heart was kept without Diſtraction torn,
And, ſweetly viewing Him, I felt at eaſe.

V.

Chearful I ſang; "Nor Sickneſs, Death or Life;
Nor all the Pow'rs of Hell, or Pow'rs above;
Nor all Creation's congregated Strife;
Can e'er diveſt me of my Saviour's Love."

VI.

I ſang; and lo, ſweet Charity divine,
And ſmiling Health, and white-rob'd lovely Peace,
Chear'd me from Heav'n with Influence benign,
Diſperſing all the Horrors of Diſeaſe.

VII.

This interpoſing Kindneſs of my Lord,
Which thus my wounded Heart and Head could raiſe,
May all my grateful Faculties record,
And all my Songs declare his wond'rous Praiſe.

VIII.

Let me, on Earth, to mark a Pilgrim's Way,
Trophies of Grace ſet up along the Road,
That foll'wing Pilgrims, as they paſs, may ſay,
"Here walk'd a favour'd Paſſenger to God."

VII.

Safety, Reſt, and Victory, in God.

I.

My Heart, no more depreſt,
Rejects unhallow'd Fear:
God is my Hope, his Truth my Reſt,
His Will my Care:
Amid the Storms below,
In Him I find a Calm
For ev'ry Pang, that Senſe can know,
He gives a Balm.

II.

The Devil, World, and Sin,
However loud they roar,
Or Foes without, or Foes within,
Can rule no more:
Almighty Strength ſhall quell
And graciouſly controul
The Force of Earth, and Force of Hell,
Againſt my Soul.

III

Cleans'd by redeeming Blood,
In Righteouſneſs array'd,
I ſafely paſs o'er Sorrow's Flood,
Nor paſs afraid:
Bleſt by the God of Love,
I chearful ſpend my Days,
And, longing for my Crown above,
The Giver praiſe.

IV.

IV.

Death, with his icy Hand,
Shall only lead me nigh
The promis'd Reſt, and ſafely land
Beyond the Sky:
For this I lift my Voice,
For this my God adore;
Rejoice, my Soul, again rejoice,
For evermore.

VIII.

PSALM LXXIII. 1.

"Truly is Iſrael's God to Iſrael good."—
Hard Truth to learn, and rarely underſtood!

The Man, whoſe ev'ry Thought or Paſſion turns
Central to Earth, the faithful Maxim ſpurns;
Recites the Torments of the martyr'd Hoſt,
The Woes obtain'd, and Lives or Fortunes loſt;
Inſults their Want of Wealth, or Want of Senſe,
And, with ſelf-tutor'd Heart, would reaſon hence:
"How can the Loſs of Eaſe Content ſupply;
"Or what's Indulgence when we Self deny?

" Where reſts the fervent Hope of laſting Fame
" In the deep Ruins of a ſported Name?
" Or, where the Wiſdom, if the letter'd Schools
" Condemn our Science, and pronounce us Fools?"
Thus human Wit inquires with vaunting Pride,
Mocks while it aſks, and aſks but to deride.
Strange Paradox to Man! To Man's beſt Senſe
A wild Chimæra, or a ſly Pretence!
Hence Reaſon's Sons all to her Rule confine,
And, meas'ring Height and Depth by her ſhort Line,
Raiſe on the Topic a contemptuous Sneer,
And vent their Wit and Rage together here.

But GOD, whoſe nervous Wiſdom form'd the Skies,
Who bade the Univerſe in Order riſe,
And fix'd that Order by his ſure Decrees,
Thinks not as Man, nor as a Mortal ſees.
However low on Earth, or weak, or few;
However Men or Hell with Hate purſue;
His ranſom'd Flock is his peculiar Care;
He marks their Sorrow, and regards their Pray'r:
His Eye with Tenderneſs ſurveys their Woe;
His Hand leads onward where their Feet ſhould go:
Each noxious Thorn, that hurts them when they roam,
Stings by Direction, and but drives them home.
Ev'n want of outward Good, through inward Grace,
Yields a rich Gift, and well ſupplies its place:
And Life or Death, Diſeaſe or kindly Health,
The Pangs of Poverty, or Shares of Wealth,

By

By ſov'reign Wiſdom led, are underſtood
Only to labor their eternal Good.

Not ſo, my Soul, the Man by Error taught,
Whoſe Lore extends to all, but—what it ought.
Though paſs his Years in full Parade of Mirth,
However great his Fortune or his Birth;
Know, that his painted Glory muſt e'er long,
With all its glitt'ring Train and flatt'ring Throng,
To ſwift Oblivion paſs or dull Decay,
And, like an Ev'ning Shade, muſt ſink away.
Though now his Path of Wickedneſs may ſmile,
And gayeſt Scenes the untaught Eye beguile;
Alas, how ſoon ſhall rough Deſtruction riſe,
And drive its Horrors from th' avenging Skies;
How ſoon the plotting Schemes of Sin deſtroy,
Cruſh her fond Wiſhes, and confound her Joy!

If ſuch Effects from ſuch a Cauſe proceed,
And on the Back of Sin we Sorrow read;
Ne'er may I envy what my Heart ſhould hate,
But my kind Father's beſt right Will awáit!—
"Yes, Lord, on Thee my utmoſt Hopes depend,
Thou Source of Faith, and Faith's conſummate End.
Thy Way is equal, thine Arrangement juſt:
Without a Murmur, then, O let me truſt,
And, while a Pilgrim in a deſert Land,
Without an helping Heart, or helping Hand,
To thy wiſe Care reſign my future Way,
And gain freſh Strength, while I thy Will obey.
My humble Path let heav'nly Wiſdom guide,
And heav'nly Truth and Love be near my Side."

O what a Bleſſing this of true Renown,
Securing Peace on Earth, in Heav'n a Crown!
With this, the Pooreſt need but little more;
The Rich, without it, are for ever poor.

IX.

Isaiah LXV. 23, 24.

I.

In this Vale of Gloom and Sorrow,
Lord, my Soul aſpires to Thee,
And from Day to Day would borrow
Hope thy Preſence yet to ſee.
Keep my Heart from Melancholy,
When my Comforts ſeem to fade:
Let thy Wiſdom rule my Folly,
And thy Strength my Help be made.

II.

Then, though ſhould I walk benighted,
Safely would my Steps proceed;
For my Guardian's Eye quick-ſighted
No created Light can need.
He will deal, in perfect Meaſure,
That to me, which ſhall be beſt;
Then, poſſeſſing ſuch a Treaſure,
What to me is all the reſt?

III.

Can I, dare I mourn for ever,
Or ſuſpend my Soul in Doubt?
Shall my Faith be faithful never,
Nor my ſenſeleſs Care drive out?
Lord, I tremble thus to languiſh,
Thus ſuſpect thy kind Regard:
O diſpel this hateful Anguiſh,
And my wand'ring Paſſions guard.

IV.

VI.

Shall I preſume, his Truth can ceaſe
For Burdens light as mine;
Or think that Foes, and Storms, and Seas,
Can fruſtrate Love divine?

VII.

'Tis GOD commands away my Fear;
'Tis GOD ſupports my Soul;
And HE ſhall ſafe o'er Waters bear,
Or in the Flame keep whole.

VIII.

HE, HE is mine, his Word declares,
My Life, my Strength, my Guide,
How fooliſh then are all the Cares,
That would my Heart divide?

IX.

Here turn, my Soul, to thy Repoſe,
Though Worlds to Ruin fall:
His Glory GOD ſhall ſoon diſcloſe,
And be thy ALL in ALL!

III.

A Birth-day Hymn.

I.

FATHER, let my Thanks ariſe
For thy Gifts beneath the Skies,
For thy Mercy, ever near,
Sparing yet another Year!

II.

Shall I thoughtleſs onward go?
Shall a waſted Moment flow?
Shall my Stream of Time paſs on,
Nothing known or nothing done?

III.

Lord, forbid that manly Prime
Should be mark'd by Loſs of Time,
Or my Follies, youthful, vain,
Be tranſacted o'er again!

IV.

Life is Folly, Age a Dream,
Borne along the common Stream:
Earth's a Bubble light as Air,
If my Reſt be placed there.

V.

Other Courſe muſt I purſue
For the Bliſs and Wiſdom true:
How can that be ſolid Joy,
Which a Moment may deſtroy?

VI.

VI.

Come, my SHEPHERD, onward guide
Far from ſordid Cares or Pride:
Favor'd Object of thine Eye,
Let me feed, and find Thee nigh!

VII.

Thus for Heav'n my Soul made wiſe,
Meet for Heav'n, ſhall thither riſe;
And my natal Day appear
Through an everlaſting Year.

IV.

The Soul in Trial.

I.

IF to Thee I breathe my Pray'r,
Lord, wilt Thou not deign to hear!
Shall I ſeek, but ſeek in vain:
Shall I aſk, and not obtain!

II.

Shall my ſinking Spirit fail!
Shall thy Foes and mine prevail!
Muſt I onward drooping go,
Nor thy timely Succour know!

III.

Can Offence my Heart depreſs
Far beyond thy Righteouſneſs!
Wilt thou, Lord, my Guilt proclaim,
And expoſe my Soul to Shame!

IV.

Muſt I drop beneath my Load,
Left to periſh on the Road,
And the Mercies I have ſeen,
Be, as though they'd never been

V.

Can thy gracious Labor paſt
All to nothing come at laſt;
And the Wiſdom of thy Mind
Thus to Darkneſs be conſign'd!

VI.

Shall the Foretaſte, Thou haſt wrought,
Be to Diſappointment brought,
Though thy Promiſe calls it ſure
Of the Life that ſhall endure!

VII.

Canſt thou, great Redeemer, lead
But a Step to Heav'n indeed,
And throughout the Way beſide
Suffer helliſh Bands to guide!

VIII.

O my Spirit! can it die,
Calling loud for thy Supply!
Wilt, O wilt thou angry meet
And deſtroy me at thy Feet!

IV.

Then my Soul, oft idly buſy,
In contriving her own Way,
Shall, in ſweet Recumbence eaſy,
Fix on Thee her only Stay:
Then, renouncing former Sadneſs,
Rapt above all mortal Things,
She ſhall mount, with Faith's own Gladneſs,
Up to Thee, thou King of Kings.

X.

The firſt Advent.

I.

See the heav'nly Hoſt deſcending,
Gliding down their radiant Way;
All, in joyful Bands attending,
Hail to Men Meſſiah's Day;
All adoring,
Celebrate his wond'rous Love.

II.

Can ſo great, ſo good a Saviour,
Thus with Pomp of Heaven born,
Meet, for tend'reſt kind Behaviour,
Nought on Earth but cruel Scorn;
Scorn for Sinners,
Whom he ſtoop'd ſo low to ſave!

III.

III.

Grand, but not with human Glory,
High, but far from earthly Pride,
Jeſus taught th' amazing Story
Of his Kingdom open'd wide,
Of Salvation,
Rich Salvation for the Poor.

IV.

He proclaim'd the joyful Tidings,
Of Redemption freely wrought,
Of Relief for vile Back-ſlidings,
And of Ranſoms fully bought,
For Believers,
Slaves before to Sin and Hell.

V.

Come, for Grace ſo much abounding,
Come, Believers, full of Love,
With united Voices ſounding,
Shout as Seraphs ſhout above,
Praiſe to Jeſus,
Praiſe to Jeſus, evermore!

VI.

Seraphs view indeed the Wonder,
But for Men the Saviour came:
Let not Seraphs then aſunder,
But with us his Grace proclaim:
Saints and Angels;
Angels, Saints; his Mercy ſing!

VII.

VII.

Hallelujah! All Creation!
Height and Depth in full Accord,
Ev'ry Tongue and ev'ry Nation,
Honor, bleſs, this gracious Lord!
Hallelujah!
All Creation, praiſe the LORD!

XI.

PSALM XLVI. 7.

I.

Amid the thund'ring Din of Arms,
Where Terror ſounds her fierce Alarms,
And Death purſues his Prey;
My Soul, above the diſmal Scene,
Looks to her God, with Eye ſerene,
And Heart without Diſmay.

II.

Beneath the Shelter of his Hand,
I, not uncall'd, ſubmiſſive ſtand,
While Horrors burſt around;
Conſcious that he, who rules the Skies,
Rules ev'ry human Enterprize
To proſper or confound.

III.

Obedient to his Call I move,
(My Father's Call I meekly love)
And face the Rage of Man:
His Voice commands; his Word is ſure;
And I from hence can view ſecure
His providential Plan.

IV.

IV.

On his vaſt Throne, lifted on high,
He ſits in aweful Majeſty,
Compaſs'd with Pow'r ſublime;
And through Infinitude extends
Cauſes connected with their Ends,
In Order, Place, and Time.

V.

What, if his intellectual Ray
Dart forth too rich a Blaze of Day,
For all created Sight;
Shall a bold Worm call that obſcure,
Which its own Weakneſs can't endure,
Becauſe it ſhines ſo bright?

VI.

Let me fall low before his Throne,
While I, my Reſignation own,
And on his Truth depend:
Wiſdom and Strength ſhall then be mine,
God's Wiſdom, Strength, and Love divine,
And keep me to the End.

VII.

Arm'd by his Might, what can prevail?
Or, in his Boſom, who aſſail?
Or what his Love deſtroy?
This is my Rock, and this my Stay,
My Reſt by Night, my Peace by Day,
The Crown of all my Joy.

DOXOLOGY.

Angels, and Saints, and Pow'rs unknown,
All Heav'n's, all Earth's united Hoſt,
Praiſe ye JEHOVAH, THREE in ONE,—
GOD—FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST!

THE END.

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